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Standing Witness

Devils Tower National Monument

A History

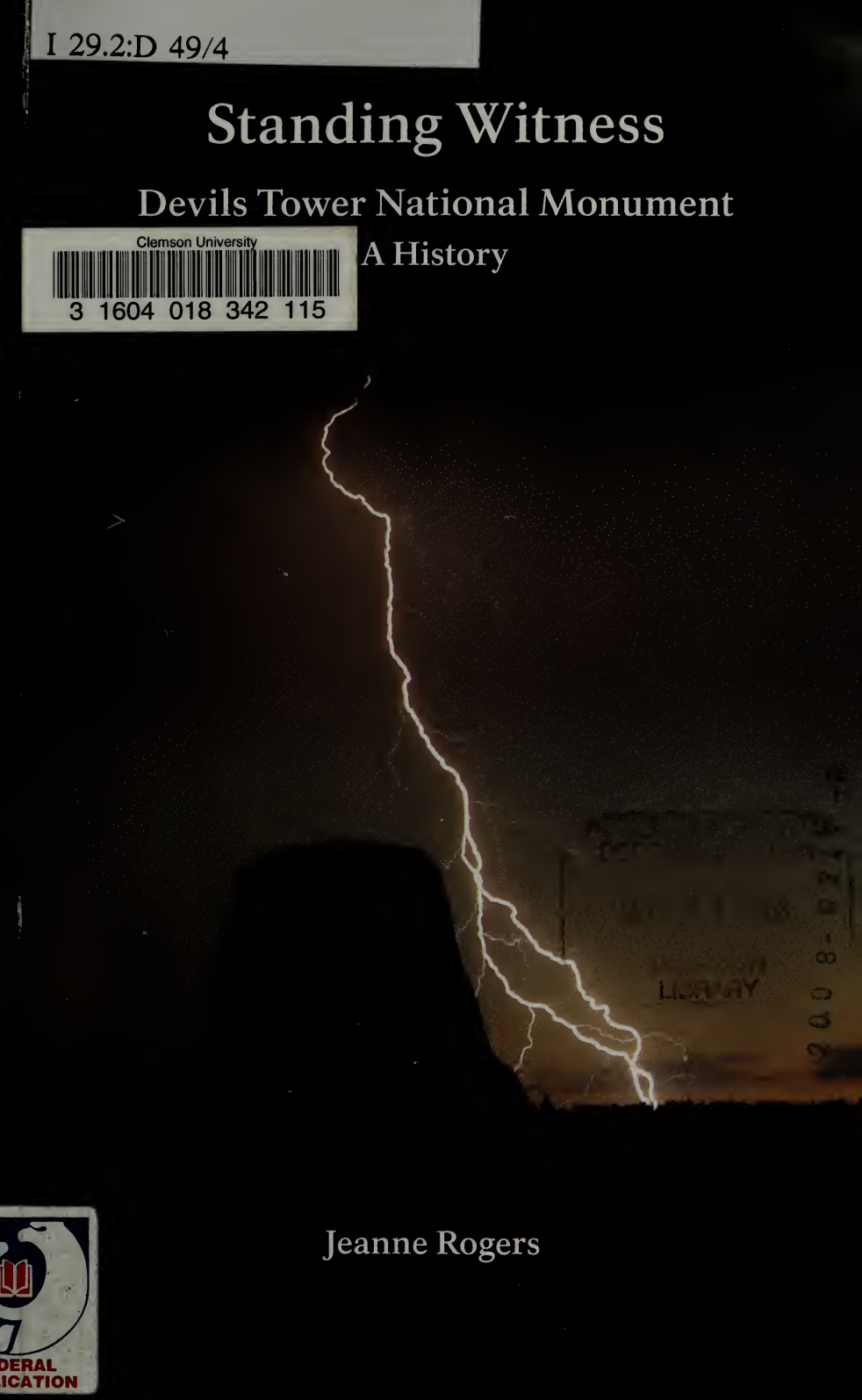
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Jeanne Rogers



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ISBN 978-0-615-17955-1

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A History

Jeanne Rogers

Devils Tower National Monument
Wyoming

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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Acknowledgements

MUCH HELP AND ENCOURAGEMENT WERE GIVEN TO ME during the course of the research and writing of this book. In the end, the writing was my responsibility—any errors are mine.

To begin with, thank you to the National Park Service for the opportunity of a lifetime. Their selection of my proposal started me on a journey I could never have otherwise made.

A big thank you to my National Park Service liaisons, Christine Czazasty, Chief of Interpretation, and Jeannine McElveen, Administrative Officer, both on staff at Devils Tower National Monument (DTMN). Their patience and assistance were invaluable. Because their time during the centennial celebration year was compromised by many factors, I value all the more their efforts to keep the book moving forward.

I am very appreciative of the assistance given me by Bruce Weisman, curator, and Lucinda Schuft at the Mount Rushmore National Memorial museum, which is the repository for the DTNM archives. Their cheerfulness and willingness to help made a daunting task much easier.

To Candy Hamilton goes much gratitude for opening her home to me, and for answering myriad questions about a variety of subjects. I am especially grateful that she introduced me to Gerald One Feather, Lakota elder, and “discovered” photographer Tom Warner.

Gerald One Feather graciously gave up an afternoon of his time, and over a long lunch, patiently explained to me the significance of Lakota ceremonies.

I remain indebted to Tom Warner, whose cover photo is, well, striking. I am thankful for his generosity and professionalism—his images used for this book added a dimension I didn't have, and needed.

A huge thank you to Roy Collier, who with his wife Gaydell, laboriously compiled a list of important historical dates for possible use as chapter headings.

Our small town library is big on helping people. For their unwavering assistance I thank Jill Mackey, director of Crook County libraries, and her wonderful staff, Violet Smith, Bonnie Stahla, and Tanya Brekke.

Many people with ties to the Crook County area shared their Tower information, or facilitated the stories finding me, and I appreciate each and every one, especially Dean and Tiny Bush.

There were several people who, through their research, made a significant impact on my final work—Daniel Chapin (Theodore Roosevelt and the Antiquities Act); Jean Skaife-Brock (her great-grandmother Esther); John and Kay Tiff (NPS volunteers who catalogued the DTNM library); and Josh Reyes (park ranger at Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, Roosevelt's home).

I could not have survived this book process without the foundation of support and sustenance from my writer's group, the Bearlodge Writers (www.bearlodgewriters.com). Where else could I have moaned and groaned and carried on ad nauseum, and still be welcomed at the next meeting? Special thanks to Gaydell Collier and Andi Hummel for their editorial expertise, Maureen Blake for her thorough critique of the rough draft, and Pat Frolander for helping research the Tower archives.

For their part in helping to organize the research materials and the bibliography, I cannot give enough credit to Andi, Maureen, and Pat. I needed them, and they gave generously of their time.

To my best friend Mardell Olson—thank you for understanding and “getting it” when few others did.

My utmost appreciation goes to my church family for their love, support, and adding my name to our prayer list.

To my dad, Bob Ulrich, a retired carpenter, who worked as my assistant researcher when I desperately needed some help—I hope I’ve been forgiven.

Thank you to my extended family, my friends, and my small town community—you gave me encouragement in many ways, held me up when I faltered, and shared your appreciation of this place we call home.

And, finally, to my family—husband John and youngest son Mason (who ate leftovers, do-overs, and fend-for-yourself meals on too many occasions); our grown children and spouses (Shelby and Rick, Whitney and Jason, Matt and Katie, and not-quite-single-not-yet-married Chelsea); and our six grandchildren (Logan, Madison, and Lane; Brayden and Taylor Elise; and Halle)—you are my life, and the writing is possible because of you.

Standing Witness

*Rock solid columns rise above the walking trail,
surreal against the sky.*

*I rest my cheek
on a fallen column, lichen-covered
and close. I smell the heat,
feel the promise, taste the solitude,
imagine what the Tower might tell me
if only she could.*

*In a small clearing
stands a charred pine trunk, remnant
of fire.*

*The burned tree alters,
becomes a woman of Africa,
her wrapped head bowed over her unborn child.
She prays here
in this Wyoming forest
amid prayer ties of black, red, yellow,
white.*

*Rock solid columns.
Rock found only here, Montana,
Africa. Around the world and back
on the secrets of stone.*

Preface

“Human environment, good and bad, starts with the rock, coupled with the other two major necessities, water and air. Ruin one of these three basic essentials and humanity is in deep trouble.” Dr. J. David Love, scientist emeritus with the U. S. Geological Survey¹

NATURAL WONDERS HAVE LONG HELD PLACES OF HONOR and significance for the humans who share their world. From a humble beginning as an eroded igneous intrusion, to the prestigious status as America’s first national monument, to the monument centennial anniversary celebration, the Tower has beckoned and captivated visitors.

Rising 1,267 feet above the Belle Fourche River, the 867-foot rock Tower is one of the most conspicuous physiographic features of the Black Hills. Devils Tower National Monument (DTNM) lies at the western edge of the Hills, in the central-west portion of Crook County, Wyoming. The Little Missouri Buttes (three, four, or five, depending on who’s counting), about four and a half miles northwest of the Tower, and the Tower are at the westerly end of a zone of igneous intrusives. Inyan Kara Mountain is at the easterly end, with the Black Buttes, Sundance Mountain, and other lesser-eroded domes in between.

To many American Indian tribes the Tower is not scenic,

but sacred. Almost everyone, of any nationality, who visits the Tower experiences some sense of “other-worldliness,” of a connectedness beyond the physicality of the rock—a sense of wonder, to be sure, but deeper and broader. The Tower evokes an emotional response from visitors, whether or not they have come in search of such an encounter.

Newell F. Joyner, custodian of DTNM from 1932 to 1947, said in a 1946 post-war report to the Department of the Interior:

From those I have contacted of the nearly one-third million visitors in the past fourteen years, I have decided that practically all of the visitors to Devils Tower have unexpectedly thrilled at the magnificence, the symmetry, the color, and the manifestation of the forces of nature. They have gained inspiration. They have been drawn out of the mundane and fleeting affairs of man, measured in minutes, and for a while been lifted to the timeless realm of magnificent nature whose perpetuity of plan is but slightly and temporarily affected by the idiosyncrasies of man and the ‘catastrophic’ situations he develops. Although undisputedly listed as a scientific wonder, it is more than that—it is primarily one of the world’s inspirational wonders, even to the majority of scientists. Since peace and well-being can only come about by the relegating of human affairs to their proper place in nature, and since such relegation can only be brought about by an awareness of the whole scheme, it seems to be that the Devils Tower, along with other inspirational phenomena, has a tremendous significance to our nation which is looked to for leadership in establishing the peace.²

In the book *Voices of the Rock*, author Robert M. Schoch, PhD, writes of cataclysmic natural events that have physically shaped our world. Sudden and severe events—earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, meteors, and asteroids—abruptly affect a civilization’s

equilibrium and such great natural disasters may have played a role in the rise and fall of certain peoples throughout history. While the sudden and severe do happen, so, too, do the slow, methodical processes that contribute to our landscape.

The rock that makes up the Tower's multi-sided columns has been named trachyte, phonolite or phonolite porphyry, nepheline syenite, and analcime phonolite over the years since Ferdinand V. Hayden, a geologist, visited the area in 1859. Today phonolite porphyry is the name of choice—phonolite for igneous rock composed primarily of feldspar and so-named because the rock rings when struck, and porphyry for rock with conspicuously large mineral grains in an equal-granular finer-grained mass.

The Tower is uniform, in both composition and grain size, throughout its exposed areas, leading some geologists to believe that the igneous intrusion that formed the Tower happened as a single event—not a periodic activity as in some volcanic fields—and that the upward movement of the magma was probably slow and steady over a long period of time. The phonolite porphyry's grain size indicates that the Tower cooled at a great depth below ground.

Nature continued to work—a river, the rains, the winter snowmelt all wearing away at the sediment layers surrounding and covering the intrusion. As weathering and erosion break down the sediment layers along the sides of the valley, the river transports and deposits material in its bed and along its banks, these alluvial deposits contain rounded fragments of all the rock types that occur in the Belle Fourche River drainage area, including rock from the Tower and the Little Missouri Buttes.

In the past, the river carried more water and flowed at a higher level, especially during glacial periods in the far past. Seasonal flooding deposited even more alluvium in the riverbed and along the banks; the flooding sometimes forcing the river across a bend and eroding a new channel. The completion of Keyhole Dam in 1952 forever changed the ways of the river downstream from the dam. No longer would spring flooding carry cottonwood seeds

to the terrace deposits in the watershed valley. No longer would the river flood her banks, carrying mineral-rich silt to nurture fields and meadows. The regulated flow determined the course of the river, changed the temperature of the river, changed much of the historic range and use of the river.

The impact of those changes on the two-plus miles of river within, and adjacent to, the DTNM boundary is manifesting in ways not expected or considered, or simply disregarded, when the dam was built. The national monument campground, now shaded and protected by tall, elderly cottonwoods, could soon be denuded as the cottonwoods continue to age and die. Some have had to be cut down for safety's sake, and there are no young saplings eager to grow and take their place. The river deposits necessary for natural cottonwood regeneration and growth are non-existent now that seasonal flooding no longer takes place. Species of fish native to the river can no longer sustain themselves with the decrease in the temperature of the water due to the dam; introduced non-native species come with their own set of problems.

MARY Alice Gunderson's book, *Devils Tower: Stories in Stone*, includes several American Indian creation stories concerning the Tower. *Geology of Devils Tower National Monument* by Charles S. Robinson and Robert E. Davis gives a concise and readable scientific explanation for the Tower. *Standing Witness* will look at the historical events of the national monument and will also explore the human factors that helped shape Devils Tower National Monument—from the coexistence of the Tower, the river, the sandstone, and the Red Beds, we can draw a parallel with the different objectives for the national monument, and the people who visit, work, and live in the shadow of the Tower.



*A Tower reflection in the Belle Fourche River
(Devils Tower National Monument)*

Introduction

1783 ~ Revolutionary War ends

1825 ~ Erie Canal opens

1830 ~ Indian Removal Act

1848 ~ Gold found at Sutter's Mill in California

1861 ~ American Civil War begins

1872 ~ Yellowstone National Park created

1880 ~ Dust Bowl begins

BY THE TIME PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT ESTABLISHED the Tower as the first national monument in 1906, pioneers had been living in what would become Wyoming for over 100 years. Other peoples had been surviving throughout the West for much, much longer—10,000 plus years, according to archeological records.

Clovis points, stone blades dating from 11,500 to 10,600 years ago, have been found in the Black Hills region. The Jim Pitts site, near Newcastle, Wyoming, about 100 miles south of Devils Tower National Monument (DTNM), is an area where Clovis points have been excavated, along with evidence of a hunter gatherer lifestyle. People hunted mega-fauna, large animals such as the mammoth, and later the *Bison antiqua*, an animal with a tip-to-tip horn span of 21-feet and predecessor to modern day buffalo.

The Black Hills area has Folsom sites, with stone blades from 10,900-10,000 years ago. The Agate Basin site in eastern Wyoming is one such site, with a layered occupation sequence, each layer associated with a discrete bed of bison (commonly called buffalo) bones.

During the Paleo-Indian period, generally accepted as being approximately 10,000-6,000 years ago, different point styles were used, along with new traditions and hunting methods. Some of the tribes used buffalo jumps and corrals to harvest the now smaller bison, which ran in bigger herds. The Vore Buffalo Jump, about 40 miles east of the Tower, near Sundance, Wyoming, continues to provide solid historical documentation of such harvests.

The Early Plains Archaic period covered 7,500-5,000 ago and, during this time, people began to use small game and plant resources better. These same factors influenced the Middle and Late Plains Archaic periods, which lasted until about 2,000 years ago.

From the Late Prehistoric and Plains Village era to the 1700s, Navajos and Apaches moved into the area from the north, adding to the population growth of the west. Bow and arrow technology was embraced and refined, allowing successful hunting of smaller animals, and less need to follow the migrations of large animals.

Historically, trade goods often preceded direct contact between peoples, and European trade goods began to appear throughout the west. From the Arctic to Mexico and from coast to coast, a vast trade network was evidence of a connection to many different cultures. Otters trapped in the American west became furs worn by Chinese nobles. Beaver pelts from western trappers became European felt hats. By 1803, when the Louisiana Purchase was finalized between the United States and France, the whole western frontier was being integrated into global history.

AS TRIBES MOVED west and south they continued to build relationships with the landscape, to live within the new areas. The Shoshones came out of the Great Basin area with knowledge of how to obtain and use horses. They arrived in the Black Hills in the early 1700s and mixed with the Kiowas and the Crows. The Kiowas lived along the Yellowstone River and forged a long-lasting alliance with the Crows. The Crows eventually reestablished their culture centered around the Big Horn Mountains, including the Black Hills area.

The Arapahos moved out of their agricultural villages in the east, pushed west by European expansion and aggressive Ojibwe tribes with European guns. After the British traded guns to the Dakota tribes, the Cheyenne, caught in the middle, migrated west, gathering at Bear Butte in western South Dakota to recreate their Plains society.

Early in the 1800s the Cheyenne tribe started to divide, and 30 years later, one tribe became two—the Northern Cheyenne and the Southern Cheyenne. The Northern Cheyenne allied with the Teton Dakotas as the Ojibwe pushed the Dakota people onto the plains, and the Teton Dakotas pushed other peoples out of the Black Hills.

Tribes competed for favored hunting areas, but territorial boundaries were ill-defined and overlapping. The introduction of the horse and gun in the 1700s, the onset of infectious diseases of European origin, the European intrusion into the Americas, and the loss of land and resources, all caused havoc among the pre-existing populations. The European concepts of colonization of land and annihilation were foreign to those whose social, religious, and ideological well-being depended on their landscape.

Imperial rivalries continued to shape the political and cultural future of North America as England, France, Spain, Russia, and the United States all sought the power and place of the West. William Clark, Meriwether Lewis, and their 1804 Corps of Discovery became the latest in a line of travelers and adventurers

to explore west of the Mississippi—Spanish, French, Russian, and British expeditions had been moving throughout North America for decades.

Whether these men were travelers, entrepreneurs, or agents of imperialism, most were visionaries and tough-minded dreamers—men who drew maps, took notes, envisioned a world much larger than most people of that time expected. Yet, everywhere these adventurers moved, people were already there, living in tribes, clans, villages, and small communities: trappers, mountain men, American Indians. And not far behind were the white settlers with their own dreams about the West.

IN 1785 THE new Federal government adopted the rectangular system of surveying and dividing lands, and officials began to partition the land into one-mile square sections, and six-mile square township plats. In an effort to encourage land ownership, Congress passed the Land Ordinance Act of 1785, which allowed citizens to buy a section (640 acres) for a minimum price of one dollar an acre. However, this \$640.00 purchase price was much more than most people could afford. The Land Act of 1796, which raised the purchase price to two dollars an acre, effectively pushed land ownership out of reach for the common family.

Congress tried to rectify the land ownership issue by passing the Harrison Land Law in 1800, changing the minimum purchase to one-half of a section (320 acres); the purchaser could use a small down payment and have a four-year payoff period. In 1804 the minimum land buy was a quarter-section (160 acres), further reduced to 80 acres in 1820.

After the Louisiana Purchase was completed in 1803, nearly doubling the landmass of the United States, more trading posts were founded throughout the West to take advantage of established trade networks. As news from the Lewis and Clark expedition spread, many more trapping parties and companies moved into the west, creating rivalries and competition for the

game supply. More people and commerce meant more conflict and, as the years passed, differing factions—American Indians, trappers, emigrants, homesteaders, cattlemen, the military—drew increasingly stubborn limits in the compromises they made.

The Office of Indian Affairs, established as a division of the War Department, was assigned a commissioner in May of 1832 to manage American Indian business. (This agency would be renamed Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1947.) In 1849 the division and its responsibilities transferred to the Department of Interior, newly-created to manage land issues.

The Pre-emption Act, crafted in 1841 to solve the problems of lands that were claimed by “squatters” ahead of the government surveys, gave the “squatter” the right to buy up to 160 acres for \$1.25 an acre when the land was offered for public sale. This act required proof of a dwelling or other improvements made to the property.

Gold was found at Sutter’s Mill in California in 1848, and that event necessitated the establishment of immigrant trails through the western landscape. Thousands of people traveled these paths west, some making it to the California gold fields—many died during the journey, and others chose to claim a residence somewhere along their route due to illness, lack of funds, or a change of heart.

Beginning in 1851, a series of Fort Laramie treaties were signed by the United States and the Lakotas, Cheyenne, and Arapahos, describing the extent of tribal territories, which included the Black Hills, and allowing payments to the tribes in exchange for passage across their lands. The treaties marked the beginning of territorial establishment of tribal lands by delineating boundaries. Miners and settlers with their wagon trains traveled over the Oregon and later the Bozeman trails; this influx further eroded the delicate accord between American Indians and settlers.

THE BLACK HILLS of South Dakota and Wyoming are considered an “ecological island”—the Hills have unique resources that continue to attract people. To American Indians there are significant social, religious, and ideological events based in this region, tied specifically to natural entities like the Tower, Bear Butte and Harney Peak.

The Warren Expedition, authorized by the U.S. Secretary of War and led by Lieutenant G. K. Warren in 1857, received orders to locate a way to connect the Fort Snelling Military Road with Fort Laramie and South Pass. After exploring the North Fork of the Platte and the Niobrara River, Warren’s remaining time was to be spent in the Black Hills, with orders to examine them in detail, “ascertaining everything relating to the agricultural and mineralogical resources of the country, its climatology, its topographical features, and the facilities or obstacles which these latter offer to the construction of rail or common roads.”¹

Traveling north into the Black Hills, the expedition confronted a Sioux hunting party at Inyan Kara. The hunters feared that if Warren proceeded further into the Hills the buffalo on the plains nearby would scatter and their hunt would be ruined. Before turning back to the south, Warren climbed Inyan Kara, spotting the Tower and Little Missouri Buttes using a spyglass. A sketch map from this expedition calls the Tower *Mato Teepee*; Warren’s official map refers to it as *Bears Lodge*.

A letter written by Warren to William F. Reynolds included the sketch of the Tower and the Little Missouri Buttes showing latitude and longitude:

I have been very much engaged since my return in matters unconnected with my Nebraska report and have been prevented from sooner sending you the sketches of *Mato Teepee* to which I promised you. My sketch was taken by looking thru a large Fraunhofer Telescope and my bearings with a small pocket compass but with great care. I was on top of [Inyan Kara].²

In 1859 The Reynolds Expedition, also called the Yellowstone

Expedition, set out under the leadership of William Reynolds to explore the area beyond the Big Horn Mountains in Wyoming, and also the Upper Yellowstone and Powder River regions. Geologist Ferdinand Hayden (who had also accompanied the Warren survey) summarized the geological structure of the Black Hills in an 1869 report and spoke of finding flecks of gold. His geology map called the Tower *Bear Lodge*, as did the official expedition map, which was not published until 1868 because of the Civil War.

The Homestead Act of 1862 offered 160 acres, free (except for a small filing fee) to any citizen, or any person who had filed an intent to become a citizen of the United States. Homesteaders were required to reside on the land for five years and improve it within that time. This allowed settlement of lands previously unattainable because of cost, creating an exodus of people from the East. The Act originally applied only to surveyed land (it was expanded in 1880 to include lands not yet surveyed). At the end of the Civil War in 1865, there was a new onslaught of migration: those seeking a new beginning far from the horrors of a bloody war were now crowding the trails that led west.

The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 reconfigured tribal boundaries, creating what was called the “Great Sioux Reservation,” including all the land in what is now South Dakota west of the Missouri River, which included the Black Hills and more. In a rider to an appropriations bill passed in 1871, Congress prohibited further treaties with Indian nations, and by 1880 all Indians were to be confined to reservations—under threat of death.

The Black Hills Expedition, commonly referred to as the Custer Expedition of 1874, served as a reconnaissance mission to locate an appropriate place to establish a fort near the Black Hills. By entering Indian lands they were in direct violation of the Treaty of 1868, but sporadic raids by the Indians were given as justification. The very size of the military contingent—approximately 1,000 men, with 110 wagons (each drawn by six mules), 1000 cavalry horses, and 300 head of cattle—plus

numerous herders, blacksmiths, wranglers and civilian teamsters with wagons, led to some debate about the true nature of the expedition. The military gave the public explanation that the large size was not to cause trouble with the Indians, but to prevent it.

Topographer Colonel William Ludlow's map of the 1874 trip, commercially published in 1876, as the *Colton Map of Wyoming and the Dakotas*, identified the Tower as *Bear Lodge*. Several members of the group climbed Inyan Kara, with expectations of an expansive view of the prairie and prominent landmarks such as the Tower, Warren Peak, Cement Ridge, and Terry Peak. However, the air was hazy and didn't clear; it instead grew worse—Indians had set fire to the prairie to the southwest, effectively obscuring any long-distance view.

An official announcement was made on August 12, 1874, regarding the discovery of gold in the Black Hills. The Army issued orders to commanders of frontier posts to take action against all trespassers in the region, thereby upholding their responsibilities to adhere to treaty agreements.

The Great Sioux Reservation remained off-limits to any kind of activity by settlers and miners, but the report spread that the Black Hills was a gold-bearing region and, though the military tried to maintain the Reservation boundaries and sustain their part of the treaty, some men and women were determined to try to find their pot of gold at any cost.

One man stated, "I have been captured and sent out from the Hills four times, besides coming out voluntarily under Crook's proclamation. I give the troops more trouble in catching me each time, and I guess I can stand it as long as they can."³

Many of the miners, however, wanted the government to clear the way for them to mine in the Hills legally, either by purchasing the area, or obtaining a concession from the Indians that would allow them to prospect and mine for gold.

The federal government began to negotiate the purchase of the Black Hills. The need for accurate and reliable information

regarding the nature and value of mineral deposits predicated the establishment of an expedition organized in 1875. Walter P. Jenney was appointed to do the geological work, assisted by Henry Newton. The personnel for the Jenney expedition included a topographer and an astronomer, along with a corps of miners and laborers. They joined their military escort at Fort Laramie—400 men under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Richard I. Dodge—and, moving north, entered the Hills by the east fork of Beaver Creek.

Dodge's orders were to support the geologists in their survey of the Hills. Relying on Newton's geological notes, and his own experiences during the expedition, Dodge wrote a book published in 1876, called *The Black Hills*, in which he refers to Bear Butte as *Bare Peak* and the Tower as *Devils Tower*.

His explanation:

On preceding maps this mountain has been called Bear Butte, and the creek which flows by its base Bear Butte Creek. This is so evidently a misnomer that our surveyors changed the name to what the original namer evidently intended. The elevation is one of solid granite rock, entirely devoid of all vegetation. 'Butte' means an elevation too high to be called a hill, too low to be called a mountain. This peak rises to the height of five thousand two hundred feet above tide-water, and, standing on the plain several miles from the nearest mountains, appears yet higher. It is not a 'butte.' 'Bare Peak' expresses exactly what it is, and that name was accordingly bestowed upon it by our surveyors.

About the Tower he wrote: "Its summit is inaccessible to anything without wings. The sides are fluted and scored by the action of the elements, and immense blocks of granite, split off from the column by frost, are piled in huge irregular mounds about its base.

"The Indians call this shaft 'The Bad God's Tower', a name adopted, with proper modification by our surveyors."⁴

Almost all American Indian names for the Tower relate to a bear. In a Lakota dictionary translation, devil/bad god/dangerous spirit is *wakansica* (pronounced *wah-KON-she-cha*); black bear is *wahanksica* (pronounced *wah-ON-ksee-cha*), which gives rise to the possibility that Dodge, or someone with him, mistranslated what he heard.

The surveyors Dodge mentions, Jenney and Newton, wrote their preliminary report in 1876, and in it used the name *Bear Lodge* for the Tower. Their official government report of the expeditions was published in 1880—on the map and accompanying drawing the Tower is also labeled *Bear Lodge*. As a direct product of one of the “Great Surveys,” this map was the official source for place name purposes at that time.

Jenney said of the Tower in the 1880 report, “The *Bear Lodge* (*Mato Teepee*)—this name appears on the earliest map of the region, and though more recently it is said to be known among the Indians as ‘the bad god’s tower,’ or in better English, ‘the devil’s tower,’ the former name, well applied, is still retained.”⁵ He refers to the Tower as *Bear Lodge* throughout his report.

He also commented about the Tower’s structure: “Its summit is so entirely inaccessible that the energetic explorer, to whom the ascent of an ordinarily difficult crag is but a pleasant pastime, standing at its base could only look upward in despair of ever planting his feet on the top. At a distance it resembles not a little the unfinished Washington national monument in Washington City, with the difference, however, that Nature has completed her work.”⁶ (In 1880 the Washington Monument would still have been under construction, which began in 1848; the building finally opened to the public in 1888.)

Updated reprints of the Reynolds map produced in 1877, 1891, and 1910 refer to the Tower primarily as *Bear Lodge*, and as *Devils Tower* in smaller print. Dodge’s book, however, became a bestseller of sorts. Popular with gold miners, settlers, and visitors to the region, the book was used as a travel guide by those moving west, and many of those travelers began using the

term Devils Tower.

Not everyone agreed with Dodge. In 1920 Major General H. L. Scott wrote a letter to the Historical Society of Wyoming:

I used to hunt in the Bear Lodge or upper Belle Fourche... I felt outraged that Colonel Dodge should so violate precedent or explorer's ethics so as to change the name in 1876 to Devil's Tower, a name without taste, meaning or historical precedent [sic] – which received its vogue because there were no white people in the country when Warren and Raynolds made their reports but were coming in when Dodge wrote his work, which was much sought after by the newcomers. I had the name "Bear Lodge" put back on the maps of the Department of Dakota with headquarters in St. Paul in those days and I am writing now ... in the hope that good taste and historical precedent [sic] will appeal to the people of Wyoming to give its most remarkable rock its own aboriginal name.⁷

CROOK COUNTY, WYOMING, created from parts of Laramie and Albany counties in 1875, became an official incorporated county in 1885 when the population requirement was met. Wyoming statehood would follow in 1890; that same year Weston County was carved from the southern half of Crook County to create their present-day boundaries.

At the same time that small towns, ranches, and work camps were being established throughout northeast Wyoming, two more agreements effectively ended the nomadic existence of the Plains Indians. The Dawes Severalty Act, also known as the General Allotment Act, in 1887 gave the President power to reduce the landholdings of the Indian nations by allotting one hundred and sixty acres to heads of Indian families and eighty acres to individuals. The remaining lands of the reservations were then opened up to settlement.

In 1889 the Sioux signed an agreement with the U.S. government to break up the Great Sioux Reservation. Instead of one great mass of land allotted to the Indians, there would be six smaller and separate reservations, and again, the remainder of the land was opened to settlement.

Manifest Destiny—an implied divine sanction for the United States to spread from the Atlantic Ocean to the shores of the Pacific—has always seemed a concept of “scientific racism”, the idea of superior and inferior cultures based on science, a social engineering that espoused the theory that American Indians were savages needing civilization. Indian schools opened in 1879 to house and educate Indian children. By 1887 more than 10,000 Indian children were in boarding schools designed not only to educate, but to “rehabilitate” and “change” them. Their language and religious culture were suppressed, not only by the isolation of the children from their families, but also by threat of punishment.

To a people whose life had been rooted in the landscape, this break in right of entry to sites of cultural, religious, and historical importance was spiritually devastating and physically debilitating, for both the person and the tribe. The continuity of cultural tradition had been broken. Tribal ways were considered “contrary to civilization” and tribes were to eliminate any aboriginal practices. They were also expected to live on “homesteads” within the reservation boundaries, and after generations of supporting themselves by hunting and following the herds and moving freely about the country, this proved a near impossible task.

The buffalo were an integral part of the Plains tribal lifecycle. Hunted not just for food, but also for clothing, tools, and shelter, the buffalo was honored as a spiritually important animal. The destruction of the buffalo herds culminated in a mass slaughter of millions of the animals during the 1870s and 1880s.

Many factors contributed to the decline of the bison, but two of the earliest were the introduction of the horse, and later

the gun, into Plains Indian cultures. Many more bison could be killed by mounted and armed hunters, but the overall bison population was even more at risk once trading organizations, such as the American Fur Company, began to purchase bison skins, following a dwindling supply of beaver pelts. More and more bison, or American buffalo, were killed, so that their skins could be traded for firearms, gunpowder, textiles, and other manufactured goods.

New railroad lines not only carried large numbers of people to the West in search of gold and inexpensive land, they also carried buffalo hides back to the east. Many of the animals were killed to feed the railroad workers; many were killed purely for sport, or for their tongues alone, which were considered a delicacy. Hunting the buffalo was also justified by some as an aid in the government's struggle against the Plains Indians—by destroying their primary food supply, the U. S. government was almost certainly assured control over the Indians. By the turn of the 20th century only one wild herd of bison remained, the Indian nations were confined to government-maintained reservations, and western settlement continued to expand.

Such was the remote and rugged Wyoming country in which the Tower stands, in witness to the history of this western landscape, and witness to stories unfolding.



*Aerial view from the southwest up the Belle Fourche River valley
(Devils Tower National Monument)*

Chapter I

1890 - 1910

1890 ~ Wyoming granted statehood;

Wounded Knee Massacre

1893 ~ Panic of 1893

1898 ~ Spanish-American War

1903 ~ Wright brothers make first successful airplane flight

1906 ~ Devils Tower National Monument established

1908 ~ Ford Model T appears on market

ABURGEONING CONSERVATION EFFORT IN THE EAST RESULTED in the successful establishment of parks and forest preserves. Congress joined these efforts in 1864, donating federal land in Yosemite Valley to California for a state park, an initial attempt to create parks throughout America. In 1872, Congress reserved Yellowstone National Park, located in the Wyoming and Montana territories, "as a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."¹ Yellowstone National Park remained under the direction of the Department of the Interior, as there was no state government to receive and manage the new park. It was then under the management of the United States Cavalry before coming under the jurisdiction of the newly-created National Park Service in 1916.

Other national parks were designated as such in the 1890s and early 1900s. The idealism of preserving nature often fought with the desire to promote tourism—western railroads lobbied for many of the early parks, sometimes building grand hotels in them to encourage their passenger business.

From 1889 to 1892 the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad worked to extend its tracks from the South Dakota state line through Newcastle, Moorcroft, and on to Sheridan, all in Wyoming. Since the Tower could be seen from several points on this new route, it is highly probable the railroad had some influence in the movement to protect the Tower.

In February of 1890 Charles Graham, a Crook County resident, filed a preemption application (for homesteading on property) for the 160 acres encompassing the Tower. Homestead applications were to be made by the person who would “prove up” the land, but reportedly, Graham worked for the Currycomb Ranch, a large outfit located west of the Tower, and had filed the claim in order to turn the land over to the ranch.

A letter from the Commissioner of the General Land Office (GLO) to the District Land Office in Buffalo, WY, in August of 1890 withheld the Tower lands from settlement pending an investigation:

From information received at this office it appears that a great national wonder locally known as the ‘Devils Tower’ technically called the ‘Bear Lodge Butte,’ is situated in Sec. 7, T.53N., R.65W., to which title is being sought for speculative purposes.

You will, until further order, reject any and all applications offered for filing in your office, for lands embracing any portion of Sec. 7 and 18, T.53N., R.65W., Sec. 12 and 13, T.53N., R.66W.² [T is township, N is north, R is range, W is west, the method of identifying land within the rectangular system of surveys.]

Graham produced “support” of his claim in July of 1891, citing

improvements on his homestead consisting of an unfinished house, a stable, and a corral, but the GLO investigation revealed that Graham had not filed the claim in good faith—instead he had filed in the interests of others, and had not lived on or worked the land. The GLO cancelled Graham's application in January 1892, and when he did not appeal the decision they cancelled his claim in June.

Wyoming's Senator Francis E. Warren wrote to the commissioner of the GLO in February 1892, asking for assistance to protect the Tower and the Little Missouri Buttes from "spoliation."³ In response, a few weeks later the Tower and the Little Missouri Buttes became part of a 60.5-square-mile forest reserve established under the Forest Reserve Act of 1891, which allowed for the creation of national forests. However, the Act did not address administration and management issues of these areas. While the reserves fell under the Division of Forestry, which in turn was under the Department of Agriculture, they would have no direct management until the Organic Act of June 1897, which allowed for organization and management of the reserves by forest rangers under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior. State Forest Reserve Superintendents were appointed by the GLO for each state that had reserves, and the next year hired supervisors and forest rangers for each reserve.

After an examination in the field by the GLO of the Tower forest reserve, the size was reduced to 18.75 square miles in June of 1892, with the unreserved portion reopened to settlement (in 1898).

Senator Warren wanted more decisive action taken regarding the Tower. He introduced a bill (S. 3364) in the United States Senate for the establishment of Devils Tower National Park. The GLO advised that the park remain the size of the reserve, and the bill, introduced in July 1892, was referred to the Committee on Territories. Congress took no further action on the bill. Though the park idea did not receive much public support, proponents for Tower protection kept the area in forest reserve through the

next decade.

The Tower was a favorite gathering place for the people who lived nearby, and became a popular picnicking and camping site for those living within a day's travel by horse and wagon.

The first recorded climb of the Tower by two local ranchers, Willard Ripley and William "Bill" Rogers, became the cornerstone of a Fourth of July celebration in 1893. Ripley moved to the Crook County area in 1880 with his parents Augustus "Colonel" and Pheobe Ripley when he was fifteen years old. By 1892, when he married Alice Mae "Dollie" Proctor, he was ranching on the Belle Fourche River about two miles north of the Tower. Ripley also served as a president of the Hulett State Bank.

Rogers moved into Wyoming in the early 1880s. A former miner in the Black Hills of South Dakota, he worked for a Crook County rancher before creating a partnership with Wayne Morris. Their first enterprise was hauling goods with a team and wagon; eventually they bought a ranch and cattle.

In 1886 Rogers and Morris parted ways, with Morris keeping the ranch and Rogers taking the cattle, and evenly splitting the rest of their gear. Rogers had married Linnie Knowles and they moved to a homestead located on Cabin Creek, later moving to Barlow Canyon, a few miles north of the Tower. Albert Knowles, Linnie's brother, recalled Rogers making a statement in 1890 that there surely was some way to get to the top of the Tower. "I'll be on top of the Tower before three years," Rogers boasted to Knowles.⁴ A large, raw-boned man, Rogers feared neither man nor the devil, according to his sister, Mrs. A. T. Adams, and he planned to attempt a climb as soon as the way could be found.

By the spring of 1893, Ripley and Rogers were friends, and soon to be business partners. At the urging of Colonel Ripley, who was also of the idea that the Tower could be climbed, the men began a collaborated effort to find a way to the top of the Tower. The existing drought and lean times spurred the idea that money could be made from the climb.

The men tried to fly a large kite over the Tower, the plan being

to get a string over the top, pull over a heavier cord, and finally a rope which would give them assistance in their climb up the Tower. They worked with the kite about three weeks when it became lodged in a crevice. While working to free the kite they realized that the crevice was a long crack between two columns that appeared to go all the way to some broken ledges about two-thirds of the way up. They determined that if they could reach those ledges they could climb unassisted to the top.

From their collected years of experience on the western frontier, Ripley, Rogers, the Colonel, and friends devised a plan to build a ladder in the vertical crack. Pegs could be driven into the crevice, and boards connecting the free ends of the pegs would stiffen and brace the steps of the ladder. (The upper portion of this ladder was reconstructed in 1972 and remains visible on the Tower.)

The Colonel and Rogers began cutting oak, ash, and willow trees, sawing them into pegs 24 to 30 inches long, about three inches in diameter, and sharpened on one end. They hauled the pegs by wagon to the Tower base, then climbed the talus slope to the rope and pulley Ripley had fashioned to lift the pegs up the side of the Tower.

As Newell F. Joyner, custodian of the Tower from 1932 to 1947, would relate, while this may sound simple, it was anything but:

It should be mentioned that the base of the upper, columnar, portion of the Tower lies about 250 to 300 feet above the picnic and camping area. The columns extend upward to the rim of the top to a length of 550 to 600 feet, except on the southeast side, where a sloping bench limits the columns to a length of some 300 feet. The ladder was placed on this southeast corner at about the only place on the whole Tower where may be found a continuous open vertical crack between two columns for their full height.

All of this can be told in a sentence or two—but imagine

the time and patience (and some say, *nerve*) required to accomplish the construction of the 350-foot ladder. . . . The pegs had to be driven into the crack. Apparently, at first the pegs were fairly heavy and long and close together. But those near the top were the opposite in each of these three respects. The pegs were necessarily driven in from the left, and Ripley, because of his left-handedness, performed this task, by no means a small feat when you consider the conditions. . . .⁵

The column on the left of the crack was flat, but on the right side the rock protruded outward. Ripley stood on one stake, leaned his right shoulder and hip against the rock, and hammered with his left arm. Because of a change in the angle of the crack, the ladder's construction near the top meant going between two pegs and completing the climb with the rock on the left-hand side instead of the right.

The crack in which the ladder was being constructed ended at a grassy sloping ledge (now called the Meadows) about 150 feet below the summit of the Tower. It would require a bit of a leap to get to the ledge, then a scramble to the top.

Ripley, by the very act of constructing the ladder, became the first to climb the ladder and the first to complete the ascent to the top of the Tower when the last peg was driven about June 28 or 29.

Dollie Ripley said, "While the ladder was built the men camped at the Tower and I cooked for them. It was very exciting and I was under an awful strain while my husband was working up there. Everyday when they went to work I didn't know whether they would all come back at night or not, but they always did."⁶

She recalled in 1934, "After the ladder was finished Willard went up on top and then he came back down. He was the first to get on top. It was a very hard climb from the top of the Tower. My husband told me that there was nothing on top of the Tower but a little soil and some sagebrush."⁷

While Ripley finished the ladder construction, Rogers worked

on advertising the Fourth of July celebration at the Tower. The climb would be a free attraction, and the Rogers and Ripley families would make money with the food stands and dance they planned to host.

Rogers also commissioned a large United States flag to be made. He planned to take it to the top of the Tower and raise it to be flown during the festivities. White muslin was purchased at the Abe Frank store in Sundance. The twelve-foot by seven-foot flag was sewn to size with yard-wide pieces by Mrs. James Thain, and Truman Fox, a Sundance artist, painted red strips and a blue field around forty-four marked-out stars.

Advertising for the event included a handbill: “Devils Tower: One of the Greatest Natural Wonders in the United States, Situated in Crook County, Wyoming. The Devils Tower is a perpendicular column of rock and no human being has ever stepped upon its top. On July 4th, 1893, Old Glory will be flung to the breeze from the top of the Tower, 800 feet from the ground by Wm. Rogers.”

The handbill also assured visitors: “There will be plenty to eat and drink on the grounds. Lots of hay and grain for the horses. Dancing day and night.” It listed speakers, presentations to be made, marshal of the day, and aides to the marshal. The poster finished with, “Perfect order will be maintained. The rarest sight of a life time will be observed, and the 4th of July will be better spent at the Devils Tower than at the World’s Fair.”⁸

For several days previous to the Fourth, parties set out for the Tower, some from as far away as Rapid City, South Dakota—125 miles distant—a round trip that required at least a week. The Deadwood, S.D. stage arrived with a full load of passengers, and by the evening of July 3, between 700 and 800 people were camped on the north side of the Tower and along the Belle Fourche River. One lady camper even brought along a feather bed.

Al Storts, a local rancher who played his fiddle for the advertised dance, said of the crowd, “That would be just a small

crowd now days [1934] but it was a very big one at that time. The country was very thinly settled then and some folks traveled for two and three days to get there . . . ”⁹

Considerable rain fell that night, but a clear and sunny day dawned on the Fourth. Stands had been prepared during the night, and all was in readiness for the “rarest sight of a life time.”¹⁰

At 9:00 a.m. two ministers delivered short speeches and gave an invocation. A choir sang a few songs, and a young boy gave a recitation entitled “America.” Bill Rogers was presented with the flag and an Uncle Sam climbing suit—a white jacket with a red emblem and blue pants, furnished by a Deadwood merchant.

By noon Rogers had reached the top of the Tower and raised the American flag. About 2:00 p.m. the wind came up. Truman Fox said he could hear the flag snapping in the breeze from where he was standing at the base of the Tower. Before long the flag tore loose and floated to the ground, where it was cut into pieces and sold for souvenirs—50¢ for a star and 25¢ for small pieces of the red and white stripes.

Storts recalled, “After Rogers had put the flag up, the wind began to blow pretty hard and it wasn’t long until the flag was torn off the pole and came whirling down, I can see it to this day.”¹¹

Fiddle and organ music played as Rogers made his way down the Tower. A grand victory celebration was held. Food stands sold out, children played horseshoes and other games, and the crowd danced all night.

Knowles, Rogers’ brother-in-law, recalled three other men climbing the ladder that same day—Ivan Hoffer, Elzy Wood and another gentleman. These may be the men referred to in one account as three unidentified men who packed sections of the flagpole to the top of the Tower. Some accounts state that several other men went to the top that day, too, and other stories circulate that in the afternoon it was noticed that a group of boys had made the ascent and were looking down on the crowd. The

most reliable of the stories tells of five boys on top of the Tower, the youngest only twelve years old.

One newspaper account of the Rogers' climb began with this bold headline and lead paragraph: "He Accomplished the Feat He climbed like a squirrel and made the ascent in about thirty minutes, the distance being about 800 feet, a large portion of the way being accomplished by means of pegs driven into creases in the rock."¹²



*The stake ladder used for the first recorded summit of the Tower
(Devils Tower National Monument)*

LINNIE ROGERS, WHO holds the honor of being the first woman to summit the Tower, climbed the ladder to the top of the Tower during the Fourth of July celebration for 1895, wearing knee-high leather boots and a navy blue bloomer suit with wide sleeves. She practiced for a few days with her husband before making her solo climb.

Several years after Linnie's climb, Ripley and Pete Hazlebacker were riding near the Tower when they heard voices calling to them. The source of the hollering was traced to the top of the Tower. Three men had climbed up the ladder and were unable to find their way back down to the Meadows and the top of the ladder. Ripley and Hazlebacker climbed up and guided the men down to safety. Soon after this, Rogers destroyed the lower part of the ladder to prevent others from climbing and not being able to get down.

The fame of Bill Rogers and Willard Ripley and the success of their 1893 Fourth of July venture did not remain a good-luck charm for the men. Sometime after Linnie's climb in 1895 she shot Rogers in the head. She said it was a ricocheting bullet; his version was she shot to injure him, and she hit closer than intended. Rogers had taught her to be a crack shot rifle expert, and he maintained if she had shot to kill him, she would have. His judgment and equilibrium were impaired by the injury, and they lost business and property.

In November of 1897 Bill and Linnie stopped to see Wayne Morris, Rogers' former business partner, on their way west to find work. The Rogers' ended up in the Jackson Hole area where Bill worked as a hunting guide, before returning to Crook County. Morris later said:

While working there Rogers got hurt. I heard that he was hauling a load of poles and a line or a tug got loose and Bill got throwed and landed on his head. From the effects of this blow he went insane; he got violent and was hard to handle, he didn't even know his old friends. I got into Sundance on the morning they took him to

the asylum at Evanston, where he died. Friends told me it was too bad that I hadn't got to Sundance earlier so I could have seen him. Perhaps it is better that I remember him as he was when leaving for the mountains.¹³

In December of 1903 Rogers was admitted to the Wyoming State Hospital in Evanston, WY, with a diagnosis of "general paralysis of the insane,"¹⁴ due to the most recent head trauma, exacerbated by a head injury ten years prior, and the more recent shooting injury. He died in February, 1904, and was buried in Spearfish, S.D. Linnie left Crook County and following two subsequent marriages died June 6, 1921, in Boise, Idaho, where she is buried in Morris Hill Cemetery.

Morris had this to say about his former partner: "Rogers was a fine man, he was always a gentleman and taught me about western life. I was also intimately acquainted with his family. I have always wondered how he came to get the idea of climbing the Tower as he wasn't the kind to be doing daredevil things. He was a nice fellow to live with and when he died I lost a might good friend."¹⁵

Willard and Dollie Ripley had four sons and their holdings increased considerably in the years after the climb, but something went wrong in the early 1930s. Ripley committed suicide in 1931, reportedly because he refused to let cancer kill him. Dollie later married Frank Heppler, who began working at the tower in 1934. In 1954 she died from an undetermined cause, possibly heart failure, during a fire at their home on national monument grounds.

AFTER THAT first, widely-publicized climb, whenever the Tower was mentioned in newspaper articles, much was made of the natural phenomenon. *The Crook County Monitor* printed an article in its April 20, 1906 edition, several months before the Tower was declared a national monument:

The fame of that great natural wonder, the Devils Tower, is by no means confined to local boundaries. It is indeed known to some extent in all nations. Miss Mabel Waddell, who has been attending school at Mellen, Wisconsin, for the past year, was requested by her teacher recently to prepare an essay, giving her the privilege to choose her subject.

The Devils Tower seemed to Miss Waddell to furnish an interesting topic for easterners, and so well did she perform the work that there was an immediate demand in the school for a photograph of the great granite obelisk. The professor and the entire school showed a remarkable interest in the matter, thus giving Crook County a much-needed prominence in that part of the east.¹⁶

On July 22, 1906, Arthur Jobe of Lead, South Dakota, arrived at the Tower with a group of friends, having left Spearfish, South Dakota, four days previously in a rented team and wagon, and crossing the Bear Lodge Mountains by way of Aladdin. They paid \$1.00 per day for the team and 50 cents per day for the covered wagon.

The following is from an interview Jobe gave to Superintendent Hartzell on August 18, 1958, in which he related the story of his tower climb. Jobe was 78 at the time of the interview, making him 26 at the time of his climb in 1906. Hartzell reported:

While circling the Tower on foot they located the old ladder. Mr. Jobe told his girl (who later became Mrs. Jobe) to go back to camp and get the camera and the rest of the party and in the meantime he would climb the ladder so she could take pictures of him on top of the Tower.

The first fifteen feet of the ladder had been burned away, making it necessary for him to take off his shoes and climb with his feet in the cracks of the rock. He started

up about 10:15 a.m. He found the steps loose and had to use extreme caution. He reached the top and walked around the top experiencing considerable discomfort from cactus spines due to his bare feet.

After finally contacting his girl and having his picture taken, he started down. He had failed to mark the crack leading to the ladder and made several false starts before reaching the ledge where the top of the ladder was. He found about a half dozen empty beer bottles near the top of the ladder in one of which he placed his name and address with a note. He never heard from the note.

He returned to the ground some time around 1:30 p.m. bringing down several rock samples and a chip from the flag pole, which now are in the Adams Museum in Deadwood. The party returned to Spearfish, having been out ten days.¹⁷

Reports of the climb appeared in the Deadwood and Lead papers crediting Jobe with the second climb of the Tower. But Jobe felt that if he had the inclination to climb the Tower, many other men visiting the Tower must have had the same inclination and success, and believed the evidence he found near the base and the top of the ladder likely meant other parties climbed the Tower between 1893 and 1906.

Over the years after Rogers destroyed the bottom part of the ladder in the late 1890s, a few hardy souls reportedly did replace some of the damaged pegs and climb the Tower. Local legend had several local cowboys and even a few schoolboys making the ascent.

THE ANTIQUITIES ACT of 1906 (Appendix B) is a short and simple conservation law of three sections drafted by archeologist Edgar Hewitt. The Act passed Congress and was signed by President Theodore Roosevelt on June 8, after a long and much-argued process. One issue of contention was the

authority given to the president to declare qualified public lands as national monuments.

Roosevelt's "interpretation of executive authority"¹⁸ was progressive and expansionary. In his reading of the Antiquities Act, he moved beyond the idea that the bill was a small and restricted measure to protect objects of antiquity at archeological ruins in the southwestern United States. The language of the Act enabled him to use and implement executive authority for the public good, but it was his style of leadership that transformed the Act into one of the greatest tools of land protection ever penned in the United States.

Much could be said about a president favoring conservation measures when previous presidents had been generally supportive of letting public land be dispersed to homesteaders, railroads, mining firms, livestock ranchers, and other interests in the effort to promote economic development and growth in the west. While Roosevelt was a capitalist, and had great disdain for those who did not believe in it as he did, he also felt that unrestrained capitalism, and government that allowed such to occur, was destructive.

Roosevelt, a progressive reformer and a defender of natural resources, came to his position on conservation from his own experience and from his friendships with men like Gifford Pinchot, Chief Forester of the Forest Service, who had strong conservational beliefs, and John Muir, a Scottish emigrant to the United States who helped found the Sierra Club.

Roosevelt's time at his ranch in the Badlands of North Dakota strengthened his conservational views. He theorized that the United States would be great—not because of what it had to start with, but because it protected and used its natural and national assets wisely. He gave a speech on the Fourth of July, 1886, in Dickinson, ND, expounding his belief that citizens had a responsibility to protect the land, and to leave a part of it—whether scenic, scientific, or historic—for the future.

After being elected vice president in November of 1900,

Roosevelt ascended to the presidency on September 14, 1901. President McKinley had been shot by Leon Czolgosz on September 6 and died eight days later. In November of 1904 Roosevelt was reelected president, and continued his work in conservation and preservation.

The Antiquities Act of 1906 was, in one part, the culmination of a goal of the American archeological community that wished to see historic and cultural sites and remnants on public lands be conserved and protected, as well as to make them available for research, inspection, and study. Vandalism, protection for sites, and improper scientific study were the three main problems for archeologists working in the field. The bill also provided means for designating, preserving, and administering special parts of federal lands for the benefit of the public, the land, and the future.

Though conservationists and preservationists have philosophical differences about what should be done with public lands, natural resources, and wildlife, the unity of the two factions in their support of the Act, along with the backing of sympathetic progressive politicians, provided the necessary energy for passage of the legislation after a formulation period of five years. All agreed that something needed to be done to insure that “objects of historic and scientific interest”¹⁹ were maintained so future generations could enjoy, learn from, and experience them. The Antiquities Act provided a definitive statement that the differing factions could support with unity. By using his views regarding maximum benefit to the public and the presidential discretion afforded him by the Act, Roosevelt greatly broadened the legal extent and capacity of the Antiquities Act with his first national monument declaration, Devils Tower National Monument.

Wyoming’s Representative Frank W. Mondell from Newcastle had informed President Roosevelt of a fantastic geologic formation located in a federal forest reserve in northeastern Wyoming. Senator Francis Warren’s earlier efforts to have the

area declared a national or state park were never acted on by Congress, but Mondell was an influential member of the House Committee on Public Lands, a committee on which he would later serve as chairman, and he had the power to catch the president's attention. Mondell also came from a strong position in Congress—by 1906 he had served five terms in Washington.

Mondell lived in Newcastle, Wyoming, about sixty miles south of the Tower and along the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad. His descriptions of the Tower and the surrounding area enhanced his recommendation to Roosevelt to declare the Tower a national monument. Such status would help distinguish the Tower's substantial scientific quality, and also recognize and increase its economic impact for the northeastern region of Wyoming.

President Roosevelt proclaimed Devils Tower National Monument on September 24, 1906. In his announcement he wrote:

And, whereas, the lofty and isolated rock in the State of Wyoming, known as the 'Devils Tower,' situated upon the public lands owned and controlled by the United States is such an extraordinary example of the effect of erosion in the higher mountains as to be a natural wonder and an object of historic and great scientific interest and it appears that the public good would be promoted by reserving this tower as a National monument with as much land as may be necessary for the proper protection thereof.²⁰

Devils Tower National Monument (DTNM), at just over 1,150 acres, would be much smaller than the 18.75-square-mile forest reserve, with Roosevelt following a principle in the Antiquities Act: "... and may reserve as a part thereof parcels of land, the limits of which in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects to be protected ..."²¹ The land outside the national monument boundary remaining from the forest reserve would be restored

to settlement in 1908. Wyoming could now lay claim as home to America's first national park (Yellowstone), its first national forest (Shoshone), and its first national monument.

Designating the Tower as a national monument highlighted the flexibility of the Act—not just in its status qualifications or in the discretion afforded the president, but in the new opportunity for various national monuments to be created that otherwise might not have been. The Tower would not have been satisfactory as a national park or national forest, the only two options available before the Antiquities Act was enacted. In fact, as stated by Hal Rothman, author of *Preserving Different Paths: The American National Monuments*, before it was declared a national monument, “Devils Tower remained in limbo, neither large nor important enough to become a national park,” and before 1906 “was an anomaly . . . in the federal system.”²²

With this first national monument declaration, Roosevelt expanded the boundaries of the terms set forth in the Antiquities Act, and greatly broadened the spectrum of potential sites for future presidents. By remaining faithful to the expectations of Congress that national monument sites would be fairly small, Roosevelt successfully curtailed any lasting disagreement about his choice.

Further aiding Roosevelt in his first use of the Antiquities Act was the support and consultation of a home-state congressman. Representative Mondell could defend the site in Congress and Wyoming and, as a member of the House Committee on Public Lands, could funnel necessary appropriations to the national monument. This was significant, since the Act did not specify that monuments would receive congressional appropriations, and the administrative authority would belong to whichever governmental department owned the land. Under the current system, national parks received monies only when Congress chose to provide support or when sufficient and well-placed pressure was applied. Having a congressional sponsor in Mondell ensured a chance of success for the national monument

to receive some funding within the constraints of the existing administrative and appropriations arrangement.

The Antiquities Act was considered by many to be created solely to protect archeological sites in the Southwest. By accepting the Tower, located outside the southwest region, as a national monument, opposition to the Act was defeated. If the Tower could be named a national monument, based on scientific interest, then other such national monuments would follow. By honoring the president's ability and discretion to name scientific national monuments as allowed in the Act, then it would follow that the president had the discretion to declare the national monument area to be as large or as small as might be necessary. Within just four months of the passage of the Antiquities Act, a model for its use had been created.

Surprisingly, no mention is made of the DTNM declaration in any of the local newspapers, nor in the editions of the larger Wyoming newspapers of that time. For all of the discussion, contention, and deliberation the issue had given rise to among the politicians in Washington, there was little-to-no fanfare locally.

THE COMMISSIONER OF the General Land Office (GLO) directed the local Land Office and the Special Agent of the district to oversee the newly-established Devils Tower National Monument. They were to prevent vandalism, removal of objects, and unauthorized occupation of national monument grounds. From 1908 to 1919 E. O. Fuller served as Special Agent with the U.S. Land Field Service, with the headquarters at Cheyenne, Wyoming, and as such, the responsibility for protecting DTNM fell to his office.

Fuller was born January 30, 1875 on a farm near Decatur, Illinois, and spent part of his childhood on his parent's homestead in western Kansas. He worked on farms and ranches in Oregon, Indian Territory, and Oklahoma from 1891 to 1902, and lived in the Chickasaw Nation before it became Oklahoma.

For five years he was Register and Receiver's Clerk of the U. S. Land Office, first serving in Alva, Oklahoma, and then at North Platte, Nebraska, before becoming Special Agent in 1908. His duties as Special Agent included land examinations and appraisals, estimating timber, and securing evidence in land fraud cases which were tried in the U. S. courts. His area, the Seventh Field Division, encompassed what are now Wyoming, Nebraska, and South Dakota.

A Wyoming newspaper carried an article about souvenir hunters damaging the Tower by chipping rock from it. The story was picked up by papers in New York and Washington, D.C., claiming that the giant formation was being undermined and threatened. Fears were voiced that the famous landmark might soon be destroyed. The Commissioner of the GLO sent Fuller instructions to place warning signs at DTNM asking people not to harm the Tower. Fuller posted the signs, and visited occasionally, hoping to prevent people from damaging and destroying the natural features of the area.

Devils Tower at a glance...

1890 ~ 1910

Custodian: ~ E. O. Fuller 1908 – 1910

Chapter II

1911 – 1920

1912 ~ New Mexico and Arizona become states

1912 ~ RMS Titanic sinks

1914 ~ Mother's Day created

1917 ~ U. S. enters WWI

1919 ~ Treaty of Versailles ends WWI

“**E**VERYBODY NEEDS BEAUTY AS WELL AS BREAD, PLACES to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul alike.”¹ This quote by John Muir accurately describes what many visitors believe about the Tower. And the Tower beckoned one woman to make her home within sight of the national monument.

Esther Dollard first saw the Tower when she traveled from Wisconsin in early 1910 to visit a daughter living south of Hulett, Wyoming. A widow in her sixties, she decided to stay and filed on a 160-acre homestead near the Tower. She lived with her daughter Hettie and son-in-law, Jess Perry, and their children before her cabin was built nearby. However, Hettie did not like such a rural home, and the Perry family soon moved into Sundance. Esther stayed on the homestead, enjoying the land, her horses, her cow, reveling in her simple existence, but especially enjoying the majesty of the Tower so close to her home.

Her son Jamesy and his family lived on a neighboring ranch, but

Esther lived alone in a cabin built by Jess, and neighbor Leonard White, with ponderosa pine logs cut from her own timber. One family photograph shows a rifle, an axe, and snowshoes standing on the porch next to her cabin door, necessities for her survival.

When she wrote letters to friends and relatives she always started the letter with the date and "Tower, Wyoming." Her last letter, dated January 20, 1917, to her older daughter Orpha, who lived near Line, South Dakota, stated that she had been in Sundance at the Perry's since New Year's Day and just arrived back home. "Jess was up and come over and wanted me to go. He said I was foolish to stay here alone so I picked up and went, left my mare in care of a neighbor and every thing was all right when I came home."

She added to the letter on February 4, "The weather here is very cold—it seems the coldest I have ever seen since I came out here. You said for me to come out [to Line] this summer. I am coming and I won't wait until cold weather nor until hot weather—I am coming as soon as the roads get good in the spring. I shall just pick up and start same as I did when I went to Sundance. I left a card in the window telling Jamesy that I had gone away for a few days. That's the only way I can get away."

She finished with, "You spoke of my mail box. No, there is no rural mail here, it's only a box I put there for Jamesy to leave my mail in when they bring it and the snow is so deep now I never get to the road any more. Will close with love and best wishes to all. From, Mother. Tower, Wyoming."²

Esther never made the trip to Line. She passed away suddenly on March 11, 1917. The Tower remains her anchor—she had said that there would be no need for a marker on her grave, as all she wanted was for the Tower to be her headstone. Her wish was fulfilled. If you kneel at her grave in the Tower Divide Cemetery, the Tower rises behind on the horizon, creating the natural marker she desired for her final resting place. (Esther, along with her neighbors, had earlier chosen the cemetery site, originally named Graves Cemetery. She was the first to be buried there.)

BEGINNING IN MAY, 1911, Congressman Mondell began a campaign to encourage the federal government to develop the national monument as a tourist attraction. He introduced a bill (H. R. 8792) that would provide appropriation for an iron stairway from the base of the Tower to the top. His proposal made it to the Committee on Appropriations, but it never progressed from there. He tried again in 1913, reintroducing the bill (H. R. 33), and it, too, died in committee.

Mondell brought a bill before Congress in 1915 for the purpose of building roads at the Tower. This bill was accompanied by a request to the Secretary of the Interior from the three Crook County legislators, asking for funds to build a road to the Tower. Mondell had no more success than he did during his previous attempts for improvements.

By 1916 the Department of the Interior (DOI) had responsibility for fourteen national parks and twenty-one national monuments, but no plan for their management. Some parks were, for a time, under the control of the U. S. Cavalry at the request of the DOI. This gave these parks on-site personnel—the military engineers and cavalymen developed roads and buildings, enforced regulations regarding hunting, grazing, and timber cutting, curbed vandalism, and tried to serve the visiting public.

Other parks were supervised by civilian appointees, with the national monuments receiving minimal governmental support. Those in charge did their duty without coordinated supervision or policy guidance, since there was no effective central administration.

Stephen Mather, a wealthy and well-connected Chicago businessman, recognized the problem with having no bureau speaking for park preservation. The parks were vulnerable to competing interests, including utilitarian conservationists and preservationists.

Mather complained to Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane about the parks' mismanagement, and was invited to

Washington to become Lane's assistant for park matters. When Mather arrived in the capitol in 1915, Horace M. Albright became his principal aide.

Mather and Albright began a crusade for a national parks bureau, emphasizing the economic value of the parks as tourist destinations. Their public relations campaign led to articles in *National Geographic*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and other magazines. Mather even hired his own publicist and, with funds obtained from 17 western railroads he produced "The National Parks Portfolio," which he sent to congressmen and influential citizens.

On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson approved legislation creating the National Park Service (NPS) within the Department of the Interior. This made the NPS responsible for DOI's national parks and national monuments, Hot Springs Reservation in Arkansas (made a national park in 1921), and any other parks that might be created by Congress in the future. The NPS was directed to manage these areas "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."³

Mather was named the first director of the NPS, and Albright became assistant director. A policy letter, approved by Lane in 1918, elaborated on the dual mission of conserving park resources and providing for the enjoyment of visitors. The letter reflected Mather's and Albright's position that more visitors must be attracted and accommodated. They believed, "...the parks have an important destiny in the future of our national life, from the standpoints of educational, spiritual, and recreational values."⁴

In keeping with attracting more visitors to the national parks and monuments, automobiles would be allowed throughout the park system—they had been prohibited in Yellowstone National Park until 1915. Museums, publications, and other educational

activities for visitors were recommended, and hotels and other tourism necessities would be provided by concessionaires.

During a picnic held at the Tower on July 4, 1916, a petition was drafted and signed by 153 people of the nearly 500 people present that day. The petition, sent to Congressman Mondell, asked Congress to appropriate \$20,000 to create a public resort at the Tower, with an access road and a bridge across the Belle Fourche River. People were weary of having to walk a mile and half to reach the Tower over a trail that constantly washed out and filled with debris.

The pressure from various groups brought results. In 1917 the NPS, with some assistance from Crook County, built a three-mile long road from the river up to the Tower. No bridge was constructed, but the road was improved the next year to be better for automobiles, and the spring at the base of the Tower was made more serviceable.

To enter DTNM from the east you had to ford the river, and during the spring and summer months the river could rise suddenly and unpredictably. When that happened, those visiting the Tower could not return to the east bank until the waters subsided, compelling them to camp out one or more nights. Travel organizations and local people continued their pressure on the federal government to build a bridge. A bridge over the river, however, would be a decade more in coming.

During the time he was overseer of DTNM, Fuller would spend six years, from 1910 to 1916, investigating a land fraud case in Fremont County, Wyoming. In 1919 Fuller became Fiscal Agent of the University of Wyoming, leaving the duties of the Land Office for his new employment in Laramie. In later years, he operated as a land appraiser for several American Indian tribes in Wyoming and Oregon, preparing extensive reports on land character and value. A new appointee for the job of protecting the national monument would not be made until 1921.

Devils Tower at a glance...

1911 ~ 1920

Custodian: ~ E. O. Fuller 1911 - 1919

Chapter III

1921 – 1930

1923 ~ Yankee Stadium opens

1924 ~ Indian Reorganization Act

1925 ~ Scopes Trial

1927 ~ Charles Lindbergh makes first trans-Atlantic flight

1929 ~ Great Depression begins

DURING THE 1920s THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PROVIDED only the most minimal of accommodations for visitors to the Tower. Some work continued to be done in maintaining the roads, but the lack of supervision at the Tower invited vandalism and offered nothing to enhance a visitor's experience.

Frank Johnstone—an area rancher, active politician, and friend of Wyoming U.S. Senator John Kendrick—was offered the position of custodian at the Tower, but he recommended John M. Thorn, a Crook County Commissioner from Hulett, for the job. Thorn became custodian in 1921 and would serve for ten years, with his starting pay \$12.00 a year. Thorn's main duties were acting as foreman for maintenance and construction work and doing the paperwork necessary for preparing payrolls and making purchases.

Thorn was born January 25, 1875 at Belle Plain, Iowa and moved with his family to a homestead on Kara Creek in Crook County in 1881. As teenagers, he and his brothers would catch

wolves and receive a bounty on them from the owners of the large area ranches. At one time he held the world's record for calf roping, winning that honor at a Gillette, Wyoming rodeo.

He married Anna Peterson in 1912, and served as Crook County Sheriff from 1913 to 1918, residing those years in Sundance at the courthouse, where their three children were born. They moved to Hulett in 1919 to operate the livery stable; Thorn also carried the Hulett-Aladdin mail.

In 1922 the NPS built a log shelter to protect visitors from bad weather—a three-walled cabin made of logs and roofed with wood shingles. The use of native materials in the shelter conformed to the current trend of constructing rustic architecture in national park areas. Trespassing stock, an on-going problem for Tower personnel through the years, continued to graze on the national monument grounds and would sometimes occupy the log shelter. (Grazing livestock could eventually destroy vegetation, defeating the conservation and preservationist principles of the NPS.)

Thorn supervised the cleaning of the spring at the base of the Tower, which was said to have water so cold it would make your teeth hurt. He improved the road within DTNM boundaries, and established a specific area for a campground at the Tower—until then, campers could, and did, make camp wherever they wanted on the national monument grounds.

DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES in reaching the Tower and the lack of amenities there, visitor numbers continued to rise over the years. The Tower was a favorite rendezvous point for picnickers, campers, and holiday gatherings, and from 1921 to 1930 the estimated number of annual visitors rose from 7,000 to 14,720. After 1925 George Grenier kept a visitor's register at his store just outside the east entrance to DTNM.

A log dance hall, located right outside the east boundary of the national monument on the hill behind Grenier's store, was a favorite meeting place. Community events meant visiting,

singing, and lots and lots of dance music.

Lloyd Redding remembered one dance in the open pavilion. “Open was about right, too. One time they had a dance there and it rained. Oh boy, it rained. Just down through the center, that part of the building leaked. So there was about two inches of red mud all over that floor. People, men, rolled up their pants legs, to keep their pants legs from getting sloppy. Fun! I never had such fun in my life.”¹

Picnics, rodeos, baseball games, and dances were part of nearly every Fourth of July celebration and many of the Old Settlers’ get-togethers at the Tower. Rodeos were held on a meadow in the Belle Fourche River valley, with wagons, buckboards, buggies, cars, and trucks forming the arena “fence.” The arena sometimes became a track for horse races—in one instance with tragic results.

Thirteen-year-old Joe Kelly was looking for his parents and spotted them on the other side of the track. Unaware that the race had begun, he started across the arena and a running horse went right over him. John Woods, a local rancher, recalled the scene after Joe ran onto the track: “The horse just kicked him up and just rolled him up under the belly.”² Joe was buried in the Tower Divide Cemetery, just one plot away from Esther Dollard’s grave.

ON SEPTEMBER 11, 1927, Babe White, sometimes referred to as the “Human Fly,” made the last recorded ascent of the Tower using the ladder constructed in 1893. He was a professional climber, and believed climbing the Tower any other way was impossible.

White, who was local rancher Herman White’s relative (Babe was his dad’s half-brother’s son), spent a couple of days at the Tower repairing the ladder for his climb. Earlier that year he had climbed the 58-story Woolworth Building in New York City (at that time the tallest building in the world) and the nine-story

Baxter Building in Harlingen, Texas. (Because the stories in the Woolworth Building were so large—11 to 20 feet—the building was actually considered to be 79 or 80 conventional stories.) White had been a daredevil climber for about 15 years.

Clifford Cole and several other men rode horseback to the Tower to see the “Human Fly” climb. Reportedly about 500 people were present for the event. At the publicized time, White climbed with his rope and equipment up the ladder, and made his way over the Meadows to ascend to the top. He stepped to the edge of the Tower and waved to the crowd below before beginning his descent.

Cole recalled the climb down:

He climbed down as he went up, except in coming down he attached his rope used for climbing to a solid object descending as far as the length of the rope would allow, then after getting good footing he would jerk the rope loose from its anchor and then reattach it to a solid object before descending again to a new point where he could get good footing. In order to do this of course he had to use appropriate knots which would hold him for the descent but allow him to jerk the rope loose after he had reached new footing.³

White also advertised that he was going to climb the 165-foot tall Capitol building in Pierre, South Dakota. To gain some publicity for the Capitol climb, White scaled the St. Charles Hotel in Pierre on the afternoon of September 21, 1927. Three hundred people gathered that night in front of the Statehouse to watch him climb the building, with a spotlight following his every move. White died some time later in a fall from the side of a building before a large crowd in southern California.

(DTNM staff eventually removed the lower section of the ladder and prohibited people from climbing it after determining the ladder to be unsafe—many of the stakes were deteriorated and much of the outside rail was missing.)

SENATORS WARREN AND KENDRICK agreed to lend their support to the local endeavors to see a bridge built across the Belle Fourche River. Another petition, this one containing seven pages of signatures of people from Wyoming and South Dakota, had been submitted in 1923 to the Secretary of the Interior asking, once again, for funds to construct a bridge over the river, but even with the congressional delegation's help, they were not successful.

Finally, in 1928, with the increasing popularity of the automobile, the NPS could no longer put off building a bridge across the river. If a sudden rainstorm blew in, visitors could be stranded for hours—the river too high to cross, their cars mired in gumbo (thick, slick, sticky mud), or simply unable to navigate the steep slopes and narrow roadways. Cars stalled if drivers tried to cross the river too fast, drowning out the motor. A few enterprising locals pulled tourist cars from the river, charging a fee to tow them out with a team of horses.

The bridge, designed by the Bureau of Public Roads, was a Parker steel truss with a polygonal top chord, which gave the bridge additional strength. A flood washed out the east approach in 1929, and the NPS constructed a new approach, supported by timber trusses.

They also approved a plan to divert the Belle Fourche River flow by excavating a canal to create a new channel. To prevent the river from cutting into the old channel, 39 concrete tetrahedrons, each one nine feet high, were placed along the bank, 16 feet from center to center. That bridge revetment project was completed in August of 1930.

After the bridge over the river had been constructed, Thorn became the “dynamite man,” setting charges on the river ice in the early spring to break it up before it could reach the bridge and damage it or wash it out. He and Anna moved to a tourist campground outside the national monument boundary in 1937, which they operated until his death in 1942 of a heart condition.

Devils Tower at a glance...

1921 ~ 1930

Custodian: ~ John M. Thorn 1921 – 1930

Visitors: ~ 96,510

Chapter IV

1931 ~ 1940

1930s ~ The Great Depression

1933 ~ Prohibition ends

1937 ~ Amelia Earhart lost over Pacific Ocean

*1938 ~ H. G. Wells' radio broadcast of
"War of the Worlds"*

*1939 ~ Hollywood produces "Gone with the Wind"
and "Wizard of Oz"*

GEORGE C. CROWE ARRIVED AT THE TOWER TO BEGIN HIS assignment as custodian of Devils Tower National Monument in late spring of 1931, driving a newly-purchased government pickup truck from California to Wyoming. He would be the first full-time staff at DTNM. Previously, he had been a Ranger-Naturalist at Yosemite National Park in California, and one can only wonder at his reaction to the relative isolation of his new home. Having personnel who would live at the Tower began the development of a structured program for visitors, and would give the national monument some protection. Crowe's appointment to the Tower also generated a need for a permanent residence.

NPS Junior Landscape Architect Howard Baker and an engineer from Wind Cave National Park visited DTNM to select

a site for the custodian's residence, which would double as a checking station. They also had to determine whether suitable logs for use in the building could be found on DTNM land. The location chosen for the structure was across the parking lot from the shelter cabin at the base of the Tower.

Baker, in his inspection report, had this to say about the last leg of their trip to the Tower: "In regard to the 12-mile approach to the national monument from U. S. Highway No. 16, the need of a new road is self-evident. The present approach is over a meandering road which follows section and property lines at random to such an extent that one member of the party remarked that we had seen the Tower from all sides except the top."

His other comments about the road were concerns that would be addressed in the years following: "The nature of the ground [gumbo when wet] would make the road practically impassable during wet weather combined with narrow one-way steep grades on certain cliff sections. The distance could be materially shortened and gravel surfacing would make the approach comparable with the adjacent road system."¹ An unsurfaced meandering road with steep hills created problems for visitors to the national monument, with gumbo, precipitous slopes, and narrow roadways each carrying their own risk.

In the droughty years of the early 1930s gumbo roads were not much of a problem. But neighboring livestock breaking through the fences and grazing on DTNM land became an on-going problem for Custodian Crowe. John Martin, an area rancher, recalled how he and Buzz Driskill put about 500 head of cattle into the park on grass that had not been heavily grazed for years. Martin, who at the time was in his teens, said "George Crowe was sure on the fight about those cattle up on the divide. He came up on a big workhorse and tried moving the cattle by himself. He couldn't get it done. Buzz finally said to me 'John, we're gonna go to jail if we don't get them out' and we pushed the cows off the national monument."²

Because Crowe had no building to use as an office, the shelter

cabin was fixed up for that purpose in the early summer of 1931, and a flagstone porch laid out in front. The cabin had apparently been built with green timber because the cracks between the logs were as large as two inches, necessitating repair with split log chinking.

The custodian's residence, built by Mr. Cummings of Deadwood, was nearly completed in September. Crowe's meticulous oversight of the project resulted in what Baker called a "very fine-looking building."³ The residence, a log structure set on a foundation of native stone, was considered a good example of NPS rustic architecture. It had a living room, kitchen, bath, and one bedroom. Since there were five Crowe children, even after the house was completed, the family used a tent for additional space.

Plumbing was installed and ready to be connected to a main water system, which was in the preliminary planning stages at the time of the construction of the residence. A new campground site being considered about a quarter of a mile away would also benefit from the development of a water system.

While the residence was under construction, Crowe looked to the future and roughed-in the wiring for an electrical system, with the hope that the Tower could procure a small power generator. Crowe had also chosen the new campground area which could be used as soon as a road could be built connecting the campground to the approach road. The present campground was deemed by Baker to be quite inadequate in size, and not very desirable because of its location near the terminus of the approach road.

Baker's report to his superiors delineated the urgent need "for a stable to accommodate at least two horses, a garage for one car, and as it is planned to make this one building a portion of it could be used for a blacksmith shop." Baker suggested a layout and said, "The building is to be built of logs as the timber in this country is very suitable for such a building."⁴

During his tenure at DTNM, Crowe instituted a plan to put

the Tower more into the public awareness. He spoke before clubs, schools, and churches in Wyoming and South Dakota in the fall of '31. Crowe was determined to do his best to increase visitation at the Tower.

In a letter dated January 1932, to Mr. and Mrs. P. C. Kolinski in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he wrote:

I made a tour of the principal towns and cities of Wyoming and visited schools, clubs, churches, newspapers, etc. Received a splendid hearing everywhere—and focused much local interest on the National monument. Hundreds did not even know where the Tower is located. Twenty newspapers gave good write-ups.

I called on the Highway Commission and Governor, pleading for a better road from the Custer Battlefield Highway. No immediate hopes there.

Went on down to Denver. Among other contacts I called on Mr. Bonfils of the *Post*. He became greatly interested and gave us a good three-column article—with three views of the Tower. Promised a page in the Rotogravure section later in the spring. *The Pasadena Star News* (Calif.) ran a fine story recently. So much for press notices.

On my return I found interest in the road situation at high pitch—the Sundance Commercial Club called a meeting, took action, and are now asking our Congressmen to go to the bat this session—and change the law requiring 90% of lands to be public domain over which an approach road is to be constructed. This has been the obstacle here, the land is all patented.

Can you write the Wisconsin Congressmen to cooperate with our delegation? We have assurance of help from other states too. If this change in the law could be accomplished now—construction could begin this

spring. The work would prove a boon to many farmers in this section who had no crops and no work and are now destitute and dependent on charity this winter.

I look for 30,000 visitors here next season—and we must eliminate that dangerous grade east of the store and post office. The County has no money and will do very little on the old road after the thaws are over.⁵

He continued his campaign for a better approach road, hoping that the State of Wyoming would do the work. The condition of highways and roads throughout the state generated discussion by many people, as an editorial in the *Casper Tribune Herald* in December of 1931 notes:

...Another important factor has been the comparative isolation of northeastern Wyoming through lack of surfaced road connections.

This last condition or obstacle is rapidly passing, as brought to the attention of Casper and other central and southern Wyoming points by the supervisor in charge of the Devils Tower, a national monument of no mean distinction. Surfacing of the highway across Campbell County as authorized in a recent contract will virtually complete one-half of a circle drive by way of Sheridan. The return trip could be made by way of the Black Hills and Lusk or over the Gillette-Midwest road, now maintained by the State but still unsurfaced.

Devils Tower is an attraction with which the motoring public should be familiar. It may be reached now on an overnight jaunt with comparative ease, and continued improvement of the highways doubtless will stimulate larger visitations.⁶

By February 1932, Crowe, who had served as custodian for just under a year, was leaving for a position in Yellowstone National Park. The Crowe family departure was recorded in *The*

Sundance Times:

Mr. and Mrs. George C. Crowe came in from Devils Tower Saturday afternoon, en route to their new location at Mammoth, Yellowstone Park, where Mr. Crowe will be stationed as park naturalist. They report very heavy roads between the Tower and the highway and had to be towed part of that distance by a tractor. . . .

Mr. Crowe has done much during his residence here as custodian at Devils Tower to advertise that wonder. He was a popular speaker at meetings of various kinds, particularly at civic club meetings throughout this district. The Crowe family made many warm friends during their residence here in Crook County, all of whom wish them well wherever they may go.⁷

While Crowe had been an advocate for the national monument, his successor would become its ambassador.

NEWELL F. JOYNER arrived at the Tower from Lincoln, Nebraska, on March 7, 1932, to begin his appointment as custodian of DTNM. He had returned to college in Lincoln after serving as a ranger-naturalist at Yellowstone National Park. Joyner made a statement to the Acting Director of the NPS that reflected the austerity of his new workplace: "The only thing which is a bit adverse is that when Mr. Crowe leaves with his possessions there'll be left only three buildings, a Ford truck, and the Tower."⁸

Crowe welcomed Joyner to the Tower area in a letter dated February 26, 1932:

May I extend congratulations to you in your appointment to Devils Tower National Monument. It is a most interesting spot from the standpoint of a Naturalist. The development program is a challenge, just in its beginning.

As to the quarters, the log cabin is small, but modern

in every way—it is wired for electricity, and there is a possibility of securing a used portable lighting plant from one of the larger Parks. There are several gasoline lights here of the generator type. Lack of funds left us without a garage. I stored my personal car in Moorcroft during the winter and I would advise that you do the same until the muddy season is over.

As to the roads, you had best come by Rapid City, Spearfish, and Sundance. The Lusk, Newcastle, and Moorcroft road often being blocked by snow or mud. While you can travel Highway #16 all winter, the 12 miles to the Devils Tower has been closed to auto travel since Christmas with heavy drifts. No effort is made by the County to clear it. Yesterday we were out working on the worst drifts with some of the farmers. Even if we get the road open for trucks to handle our furniture each way I do not feel that we can get packed and various tasks in the office and outside brought up to date before March 15th, so do not rush to get here.

We just finished putting up a few tons of ice from the River, for use in summer, so bring your refrigerator. We used a homemade ice box last summer which remains here.

He finishes his letter with the prophetic “If you have any tools for carpentry or auto use, bring them along.”⁹ Crowe knew the demands for repair work would be ongoing. And with no full-time staff to help, a custodian with tools would be a valuable asset to DTNM.

Joyner’s cover letter for his first monthly report, dated April, 1932, to the National Park Service gives clear indication of the status of DTNM within the park service structure:

Would it be possible to have DTNM added to the routing of the bound reports of the various parks and

national monuments. [A single report was circulated through the various national parks and monuments rather than each receiving a copy.] I notice that Wind Cave National Park is the last [one sent] the reports. If they could send them over to this national monument, I feel that it would be a help, for thereby I might learn of progress and of administrative problems in other Parks and Monuments.

His last paragraph seems a plaintive plea: "Could we be included on the mailing list of the National Park Bulletin?"¹⁰

To be fair to the NPS Washington office, Joyner was only the second full-time custodian to be hired at the Tower, and Crowe had only served in that capacity for a year. However, it is apparent that Joyner intended to integrate the DTNM fully into the NPS system, and move the Tower into a more public position.

This first monthly report was five single-spaced pages long, full of information about what had officially transpired in the previous month. It also mentioned community needs, area concerns, and items of interest. This would be the norm for a Joyner account, the first in a long line of superb documentation by Joyner, of the Tower he would grow to love and the national monument he respected and cared for.

He recorded DTNM data, flora and fauna, his involvement with community activities, and every now and then some personal information. His wry commentary said much about how things were at the Tower: "Office equipment was ordered and should be here early in November; this is to supercede [sic] the motley assortment of apple boxes, rough-hewed benches and tables, and so forth. The old equipment is picturesque and caused much interested comment this summer, but is far from comfortable and efficient."¹¹

Joyner's wife, Laura, helped with DTNM business on occasion, meeting with visitors if Joyner was unavailable, and sometimes helping with paperwork in the Tower office. Laura later received a letter from the Secretary of the Interior informing her that

she had been appointed as Assistant Custodian at DTNM, but “without compensation, not subject to provisions of the Retirement Act.”¹²

Once Joyner had to cancel a talk he was to give to the Hulett Women’s Club because he needed to monitor the bridge protection improvements during a sudden high-water period. He had planned to attend their next meeting when a storm moved through the area making the roads impassable. Rather than disrupt their program for a second time he rode horseback to meet with them. He parenthetically included in his monthly report a comment made by his wife: “My A.C.W.P. [Assistant Custodian without pay] says that I never rode 25 miles on a horse to talk to her!”¹³



Newell and Laura Joyner (Devils Tower National Monument)

JOYNER HAD LISTENED well to the information Crowe provided him on the rural community to which Joyner was moving his family. His report of rain during April 1932 was accompanied by this thought: "This weather appears to be general in this region, and has precluded the possibility of an agricultural disaster which was impending. Another drought season would have literally 'cleaned' many residents of this corner of Wyoming."

The Depression and its impact on the area concerned him, too. "There continues to be a great deal of need among residents of this region, but our pay-rolls of the past two months have helped many who would have otherwise been charges of charity at this time. The pay-roll has also helped the local merchant, for payments have been made on past-due accounts."¹⁴

Joyner spent some time trying to procure needed equipment, and with a very limited budget he would simply ask other parks for any surplus items they might have. Sometimes he was successful, sometimes not.

Guy D. Edwards, Acting Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park wrote: "Dear Mr. Joyner: Replying to your letter of May 23, we had at one time a surplus mimeograph machine, but this was furnished to Sam Woodring for the Grand Teton National Park and it is regretted that we are unable to furnish you with such a machine. We have an extra machine here, but we need it in emergencies and we do not feel that we could consider it surplus and send it to you."

And while Edwards did not have extra equipment, he did mention in his letter some publicity regarding the Tower: "Thanks for the copy of the Big Horn Mountain Association booklet. Your national monument certainly received a prominent place in this booklet. The last issue of the *American Legion Monthly* contains a fine article on the parks and national monuments and Devils Tower is given considerable prominence in the article."¹⁵

As usual, Joyner was gracious but honest in his reply to Edwards:

Thanks for your letter. Of course you could not consider a second mimeograph machine as surplus. I appreciate your consideration, though. I detest the idea of having to beg surplus and discarded equipment from other parks for our use here, but we certainly need such material, and we have no other way of procuring it, so you will pardon my requests from time to time.

Thanks for mention of the article in the *American Legion Magazine*. I am pleased to note that the Devils Tower has received some prominence. Mr. Crowe was certainly of great value to this national monument. It is hard for me to even attempt to keep up the pace he set.

If at any time you see other articles, I will be pleased to hear of it. I am in a position where I do not hear of such publicity. The vast amount of publicity is shown by the fact that our attendance for the past month has increased over 550% above the May attendance of last year.¹⁶

Improvements were ongoing at the Tower. Associate Engineer Walter Atwell of the NPS visited DTNM in April to inspect the bridge and revetments, and make recommendations for work relative to those projects. The new river canal had been widened to accommodate any flood water that might come, in hopes of protecting the bridge and its approaches.

When Assistant Chief Engineer Burney of the San Francisco office arrived in September 1932, he inspected the authorized bridge repairs, and suggested further work to be done on the stone protection and revetments. Logs were piled up against the upstream side of the tetrahedrons to lessen the wash taking place under them and to increase the deposition of silt and rocks nearby. This would help strengthen the new channel of the river.

Another item of interest to Burney was the plan for an approach road to be constructed to DTNM from Highway 16. Contracts were let to gravel portions of Highway 16 between Sundance

and Moorcroft, which until then had been unsurfaced. Road improvement was deemed highly necessary to increase visitation to the Tower. Joyner stated that, with the rains in the latter part of September, the roads were impassable for cars—even the mail had to be delivered with a Caterpillar tractor.

JOYNER GAVE CONSIDERABLE thought to the organization of exhibits at the Tower that would be housed in the old auto shelter remodeled into an office. Preliminary sketches were prepared to show how the Tower and the surrounding region came into its present form. He liked walking the DTNM grounds—the following entry shows his interest in the world about him:

The custodian was greatly delighted to find a part of the fossil Belemnite [squid] which is rarely found. At many points in this region the cigar-shaped parts of the internal skeleton of this fossil squid are common. The cone and tongue-shaped parts had never been found and recorded until [I found] three examples of the cone and cone in place. . . .

Relics of Indian visitors are slowly turning to light. A 'thumb-nail' scraper was found near the spring. A larger unfinished scraper was picked up on the campground while an obsidian chip was found near the base of the Tower proper.¹⁷

In Joyner's very first report to the NPS director, he had stated his intention to have a professional museum, however small, available to visitors to the Tower. As a trained ranger-naturalist he was very interested in archeology, paleontology, the flora and fauna—all manner of natural phenomena—and strongly believed access to more information would enhance the visitors' experience.

Joyner toured the Adams Memorial Museum in Deadwood, South Dakota, and discussed museum issues with the director Mr. McGahey. Joyner was shown what was believed to be the

only specimen of rock available from the top of the Tower. It had been brought down by Arthur Jobe, who climbed the Tower in 1906, and given to the Adams Museum in 1931. Joyner stated, "At the first opportunity I shall attempt to arrange a transfer of that piece to our own small museum where it rightfully belongs, and where it could be more accessible to geologists."¹⁸

A new administration building, which would also serve as the Visitor Center, would house offices, storage, visitor lavatories, museum display space, and a museum work room. By March of 1933, plans were underway to prepare a few charts and the specimens that would fill all the space available for displays. A large painted map of the national monument area, currently in preparation, would round out the exhibits. In May some museum work was done on the cataloguing system, reconstruction of fossil bones, and preparing an old Sharp's carbine found on Tower land.

Joyner made a trip to Cheyenne in the middle of April, 1934, to confer with Will G. Metz, State Emergency Relief Administrator (ERA), and secured approval for a museum preparation project. The person in charge of the project would be Adolph Vorpahl of Laramie, Wyoming, who had a master's degree in geology and had worked one summer with an archeological party in eastern Wyoming.

A tentative plan was prepared, around which exhibits and collections were to be assembled. The State ERA abandoned the project on the first of May, resulting in much of Vorpahl's time being spent on other work.

According to Joyner, progress was minimal as late as November, 1935:

Very little has been accomplished on this work because of the lack of some one person who has no other problems to deal with. Arthur Woodward of the Berkley Office visited us in March [1935] and we went over the proposed exhibits, as well as the material in the field. I have been able to take a little time and supervise the

work of several [Civilian Conservation Corps] enrollees for short periods in the cataloguing and numbering of specimens and accessions on hand, as well as the partial restoration of several fossil bones of the *Diplodocus* type of dinosaur which were found locally. We have finally gotten all of our Indian material in one place and where it can be readily seen. It is not on public exhibit as yet, though.¹⁹

Field Educational Headquarters of the NPS informed Joyner in February of 1936 that funds were becoming available for the Tower museum exhibit. He was pleased with the revised preliminary plan sent to him, and excited that the DTNM Museum was next in line on the list of museums to be developed. Since he had been quite vocal over the years about the importance of a museum at the Tower, he simply stated, "There is no need to elaborate on the value of such a museum."²⁰

Joyner continued to search out and ask for items that would enhance the museum collection. He wrote a letter in August of 1936 to Mrs. Walter Halstead of Bixby, SD:

Some time ago I was talking with Mrs. Beatrice Dunn Smith...and describing our efforts to get together various items pertaining to the original climb of the Devils Tower in 1893. These items will find a place in our museum.

It was thought that you used to have in your possession a piece of the flag which was flown from the top of the Tower at that time, and which during the afternoon blew down, was cut up, and the various pieces sold.

If you have yet in your possession this piece of the flag, I can assure you that it would be of great value to us in telling the story of the original climb, should you care to donate it to us. If you could do so, please write me, and I will send you information about mailing it.²¹

(Two flag pieces listed in the museum archives accession records as being acquired by Joyner in 1938—Accession No. 67 donated by Ed Smith, Sundance, WY, and Accession No. 68 donated by David B. Hilton, also of Sundance—are now missing from the museum collection.)

Clint Wells of Sundance donated an ox shoe set and a bull whip to the Tower museum in the spring of 1936. Wells first came to the Black Hills as a “bull-whacker” in 1880, and was so employed for a number of years. He then engaged in ranching, and one year owned a team of buffalo calves which he broke to drive.

John Martin, a local rancher, recalled Wells driving a team of oxen pulling a covered wagon to the Tower: “He was known for cracking his bull whip, a good 40-feet long. He’d come into the Tower every year a crackin’ that whip.”²²

Joyner enjoyed meeting members of the scientific community on their visits to the Tower, whether they were geological students from universities and colleges, scientists, or faculty members like Dr. A. S. Worthin, Jr., Geology Department at Vassar College.

Dr. Worthin asked Joyner to cooperate with him in preparation of a paper to be published in a scientific journal. Joyner’s goal, an ambition he would have during his entire tenure at the Tower, was to point out the need for a thorough investigation of the phenomena of the Tower.

In October of 1932 Joyner began collecting items for a geological library. It was during this period that Joyner first mentioned Dick Stone of Gillette, who had been compiling historical data regarding the Tower, especially the American Indian stories of the surrounding area. Stone’s work would eventually be of great benefit to historical researchers—Joyner was able to procure a copy of Stone’s unpublished history of the Tower area for the museum.

JOYNER CONSISTENTLY REQUESTED various surveys and maps of DTNM be made—a boundary survey, a topographic survey, and maps of the national monument showing important features. His requests were, for the most part, usually honored, though some time might pass before the maps were in his possession.

His matter-of-fact, logical thinking is evident throughout the map-making process. From his November, 1932 report:

It is hoped that before many months a topographic map of the entire area of the reserve can be prepared. It would aid in the laying out of roads, trails, and other features which will ultimately spring up on the reserve. It seems to me that such a detailed topographic map is essential for all areas where there is no resident engineer and plans must be drawn up in the San Francisco Office, oftentimes without a reconnaissance by the engineer or architect with the proposed features in mind.²³

He also made arrangements with a local artist, Sidney Harvey (who was the Crook County Clerk at that time), to prepare a pictorial map of DTNM. Joyner could then mimeograph and distribute the map in an “effort to ‘entice’ the visitor to stay longer and see more of the national monument reserve.”²⁴

Joyner did not give up on his wishes easily. In the first 1933 report, he continued in his quest to acquire more complete information about DTNM:

A request was directed to the proper authorities requesting a topographic survey of the reserve as an aid in planning of all physical improvements and as an administrative help. To date nothing has been received to indicate what action may be taken.

From existing blue-prints and other information there was platted a map of the reserve on the scale of 500 ft. to the inch. This map shows the location of some of the natural and constructed features as well as the proposed re-alignment of the road. This was compiled for my

own information and because of the incompleteness of the material on hand, led to the request in the above paragraph.

There was prepared a set of plans to incorporate my suggestions relative to the proposed administrative building. This would provide office, storage, museum display space and museum work-room, as well as toilets for visitors. Such suggestions were forwarded to the Landscape Division.²⁵

Joyner initiated and maintained a good working relationship with the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service (now known as the Natural Resources Conservation Service), and other government agencies. He had a modern, holistic approach to management at the Tower, and he was not afraid to ask for help in areas that were beyond his expertise.

The Forest Service personnel inspected the national monument forest for evidence of Black Hills bark beetle infestation, offering valuable help and sending Joyner materials on forest entomology. Joyner also negotiated for a combined fire school for Forest Service cooperators and people who agreed to help in case of fire on DTNM grounds.

The Joyners were community-minded people, enjoyed meeting others, and were open and gracious in offering their personal time and energy to give visitors to the Tower a pleasant and rewarding experience.

Under the heading "Custodian's Activities" in his May report of 1932, Joyner had this to say:

Spent some time visiting with and helping local residents. Entertained them in our home, which incidentally is open to all visitors to the Monument. We find that many of the local people are curious and many tourists are interested in seeing the interior of a log house. We attended local functions. We find that all of this helps to create a better spirit of cooperation on their part as

well as giving us an opportunity to put before them the program of the National Park Service.²⁶

That same report recounted action by the Wyoming State Highway Commission designating the roadway from Highway 16 to Hulett and Alva via the Tower as a State Highway. Construction was planned to begin the next year—Crook County Commissioners diverted monies, previously budgeted for work elsewhere, to use on the road past the Tower, the route that had been serving as an approach road to DTNM. The State Highway Commission, in reporting the road status change to a state highway, pointed out that this new highway would be of great value to the more or less isolated farming region, but did not mention its proximity to the Tower; in fact, did not mention the Tower at all.

Joyner, however, knew the importance of a surfaced road to the national monument. He felt it would make the Tower available year-round to visitors, who might stay longer without fearing that a sudden rainstorm would make the roads too difficult to travel.

His May report chronicled the birds arriving—shore birds early in the month, wood warblers, swallows, kingbirds, flycatchers, western tanagers, thrushes, and others later in May. He noted when the young prairie dogs were first seen above ground, and when the young cottontail rabbits made an appearance.

A later report lists chickadees, nuthatches, juncos, and creepers being observed during a mild winter month, along with small groups of rosy finches, the more common gray jays and magpies, and the colorfully-named hairy and three-toed woodpeckers.

He remarked on a new business set up outside DTNM. Horses would now be available for visitors who wanted to ride around the Tower or make a trip to the Little Missouri Buttes. And he continued to document artifacts—an arrowhead, a huge bone in the Morrison series, metamorphosed sandstone.

The Wolfe family gave a young porcupine, apparently less than a week old, to DTNM that first spring. Joyner felt the porcupine would be an interesting educational exhibit during the summer,

and give them “an opportunity to make some observations on the young of this mammal.”²⁷ No mention is made of Mrs. Joyner’s reaction.

In a short time, the young porcupine, named Porky, had grown and become quite a pet. He outgrew medicine-dropper feedings and graduated to a baby bottle. Joyner reported, “We have found that it will play like a kitten, come when called, desires human companionship, and shows many other traits not known to be possessed by porcupines.”²⁸

As Porky grew, he got into some mischief, such as practicing branch-chewing on the rungs of the kitchen chairs. He eventually moved out of the house, but over the next two years would regularly stop by to visit. Unfortunately, Porky’s friendliness to humans led to his demise. He approached some picnickers who, not knowing him and perceiving him as a threat, killed him.

ONE OF JOYNER’S first major projects as custodian was a DTNM inspection in which he looked over all the roads, ascertained the physical boundary of the national monument, studied the trails available for horseback and hiking parties, (including manmade trails, cattle trails, and game trails), and became familiar with the topography of the area. He found some surprises. Practically all the fences, where they existed, were set in on national monument grounds, in some places as much as 220 yards. He located another group of springs and realized that two more bends of the river were within the national monument boundary, and that DTNM was considerably larger than he had previously thought.

Joyner had concerns about the boundary fence, or in some places the lack of a fence, marking national property. Joyner’s note about grazing in his December 1932 report to the Director of the National Park Service made clear his problem:

With the coming of winter, the problem of grazing on the reserve has come again into prominence. Fences in this country, if they exist, are but poor excuses for

more cattle. Our river bottom lies in the direct path of the natural migrations of the animals along the river. So far, although there have been as high as 25 head on the reserve at a time, the ranchers have cooperated as well as could be expected considering that this is only the second winter in which a concentrated effort has been made to keep the cattle off and that only a few years ago this was the feeding ground for stock from certain ranches. It will develop into a game of seeing who can keep from getting sore the longest—the ranchers or the Custodian. If I phone or visit these ranchers every other day or so for the next three months to say the same thing each time, somebody will get ‘tired’ of it. I bet I can stick it out as long as the ranchers can, though. At any rate we must have the reserve fenced at the earliest possible moment.²⁹

In the next month’s report he made another mention about the grazing problem:

With nearly 1000 head of cattle being fed within a mile of the reserve, and stock-tight fences surrounding the reserve being absent, it is not to be wondered at if there are from ten to fifty head of cattle on the reserve most every day. Cooperation ‘in spirit’ is not wanting on the part of the ranchers, but the cattle have not that spirit and insist on coming in to get some grass even though they be chased out twice a day. The only answer to the problem is for the government to construct an auto-gate and good barbed-wire fence around the reserve.³⁰

SOME EVENTS HELD at the Tower added to Joyner’s workload more than others. During 1932, extra programs included the Old Settlers’ Picnic in June, the Devils Tower Pow-Wow in July, and a movie newsreel shot during December.

The first annual Devils Tower Pow-Wow was held at the Tower

on Sunday, July 3, 1932, and by special request was continued over the next day. This pow-wow, however, had nothing to do with the American Indians, but was a celebration for area residents.

It began with a baseball game between Driskill's Dudes and the Spearfish Grays, which the Grays won fifteen to six. This was followed by a barbecue picnic, with another baseball game in the afternoon. The Upton team won over Sundance by a score of six to four. The final planned event was a cow puncher's track meet, which reportedly had some fine riding displayed by the participants. Other recreation available included fishing, swimming, golfing, and dancing.

The celebration was well-attended and the local newspaper account said the crowd hoped it would become a yearly event. However, if there was a second annual affair, it was poorly recorded—there is no mention in the area papers and none in Joyner's monthly reports. By the next year, 1933, Crook County was in the midst of what was considered at the time the worst drought conditions in Wyoming's history. While the drought did not seem to affect attendance at the Old Settlers' Picnic over the next few years, it may have curtailed the ability of area residents to attend additional recreational outings.

In December, E. K. Edwards, a Paramount company cameraman, spent two days at the Tower in the company of Joyner and George Grenier filming the Tower for a newsreel. Edwards captured images of the Tower from many different angles from the ground, with views of the old ladder and Tower reflections in the Belle Fourche River among the many areas covered.

The following day a cabin plane from Upton took to the sky over the Tower so Edwards could film the aerial movies, the first of their kind (whether the first aerial movie or the first featuring the Tower is unclear). An article in *The Sundance Times*, December 8, 1932, reported Edwards telling Joyner that "obviously his [Edward's] business was chasing thrills," and he had become nearly "thrill-proof," but that the Tower with its "artistry of form

and color, beauty of its setting, its magnitude, and the evidences of great geological activity gave him a great thrill.”³¹

Joyner recounted in his monthly report to the director of the Department of the Interior that as of January 3, 1933, they had “not received word that the material was accepted for showing, but feel that if it is accepted it will be the greatest single thing that has occurred to give publicity to this national monument.”³²

When the newsreel was released early in February of 1933 Joyner had these comments: “This was released by the Paramount company the fore-part of the month, and judging from correspondence, had a rather wide distribution. I was somewhat put out by their faking the story—stating that five persons had lost their lives attempting to climb the Tower, where actually there have been no fatalities.”³³

While long-time area residents had been gathering at the Tower for an Old Settlers’ Picnic for years, an official organization, the Northern Black Hills Pioneer Association, was formed on June 19, 1932. On that day 529 people registered, making their way to the Tower in 151 cars, according to Joyner’s notes. Mrs. Grace Bush of Hulett arranged the organizational picnic, George Grenier, proprietor of the Tower store, was chosen to act as temporary chairman, and Leslie Cook served as temporary secretary. The picnic, planned as an annual event at the Tower, retained its name, the Old Settlers’ Picnic. To be eligible for membership in the association, one must have been a resident of the area for at least 35 years.

The Belle Fourche paper, June 24, 1932, reported about the organizational picnic:

Short talks were made by Harry J. Chassell of Gillette, a resident of that part of the country for over forty-four years, who reviewed the early history of the territory adjacent to the Tower, giving some interesting and amusing side lights on ranch activities when some of the largest cattle ranches were along the Belle Fourche River, these places being owned mostly by natives of

England; Newell F. Joyner, custodian of Devils Tower National Monument, and others.

The entire day was a success in a big way, former friends and acquaintances meeting for the first time in five, ten or fifteen years, and the 'heavy' visiting that followed was not only interesting to the participants, but to those who listened in on these visits. 'Depression' was not the topic of conversation, for that just does not seem like so serious a thing to those people of the Bear Lodge country.

As one lady put it 'We have no money, but that is just a little inconvenience. We have cellars filled with canned meats, canned vegetables, canned fruits; our chickens are the frying size, crop prospects are good for food for ourselves and our livestock, and we can get along without money.' These words apparently expressed the feelings of the five hundred or more people at the Tower Sunday—they were there to visit, tell tales of long age, and renew acquaintances made in the days when going was really 'tuff' in that newly settled country; days when they not only did not own an automobile, but were lucky if they had a buggy, or even a wagon, in which to haul the family to picnics or neighbors' for a visit. Contrast these conditions with the conditions of today, when 130 automobiles gather at the Tower in one afternoon, and you have something of the picture of the 90's and '32.³⁴

The second annual picnic had 1,250 people in the crowd, with 2,385 attending in 1934. Joyner recorded preparations made by the Tower staff that year to insure a safe and enjoyable day for the picnickers:

Our inadequate facilities at that time necessitated considerable preparation of a temporary nature, as well as the employment of eight men, of whom five were mounted, to handle the traffic. We were able to park

everyone so that they could leave at any time they wished. So far as I know there wasn't a fender scratched.

Local papers complimented us on our organization which enabled visitors to enjoy a pleasant day. What further complicated our problem was the moving out of some three hundred cars in a little over a half hour over a one-way road, at the same time permitting the entrance of some thirty cars. This movement was caused by the fact that the nearest place suitable for a ball [game] was over a mile from the picnic ground. I am happy to state that there was no drunkenness on this occasion, a fact which should make this celebration an outstanding one.³⁵

The Northern Black Hills Pioneer Association picnic on



Families gather at the Visitor Center for the annual Old Settlers' Picnic (Devils Tower National Monument)

June 16, 1935 had 3,662 attending, with 4,532 people recorded at the June 21 gathering of 1936. Each year there were planned speeches, music, dancing, and games, with impromptu events and visiting rounding out the programs.

THE DEPRESSION THAT held the nation in its grip did have ramifications in Crook County. Joyner was cognizant of the help DTNM spending gave to some of the unemployed in the county. He hired locals at every opportunity and rotated crews so more men could be assisted in providing for their families. He elaborates in his September and October, 1932 reports:

As in general throughout the country there is plenty of help available for the work we have to do. The repairs to the bridge and revetment have enabled us to help ten married men who are permanent residents of this vicinity. With the coming of winter and consequent lack of work, several families will be hard put to live through the winter without help from some source or other.

The situation of need remained unchanged, except as the approach of winter made the condition more acute, with most of the local work being on farms where produce and stock-feed was the medium of payment. The work of highway construction in the county ceased last month and therefore the work which we did...was the only source of cash from labor within the county...³⁶

An editorial in *The Sundance Times*, July 14, 1932, summed up the county sentiment well:

Years ago we were launched on an orgy of spending, public as well as private. It seemed that the public held an almost inexhaustible reservoir of money and credit. But now we know differently and we are beginning to realize what it means to pay the piper. If out of the present mood for retrenchment comes a sober realization of the fact that for years we were traveling at too fast a pace, and if this can be reflected in plainer and more sensible government, local as well as national, then it will be indeed true that we have gained something out of the depression. Experience is still a hard teacher, but now

as before, it is the only instructor to whom a great many people will agree to listen.³⁷

Newly inaugurated President Franklin D. Roosevelt called a special session of Congress on March 9, 1933 to enable him to submit reform and recovery measures for congressional validation. The 99-day session came to be known as the "Hundred Days." The president called his progressive proposals "The New Deal," an effort to end The Great Depression and reform the nation's economy.

On March 31, 1933 Congress passed the Emergency Conservation Work Act (ECW). Many of the projects completed at the Tower in 1934 and 35 were due to ECW monies and laborers. Although the ECW was commonly referred to as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Joyner does not refer to the program by that name until 1935, when the first CCC camp was located at DTNM. The ECW was succeeded by, and the name officially changed to, the CCC on June 28, 1937, and it, in turn, was discontinued on June 30, 1943.

Another of the federal government's responses to overwhelming unemployment throughout America would greatly benefit DTNM and help move the Tower into greater notice by the public. The Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works was created by Title II in the National Industrial Recovery Act of June 1933. Eventually known as the Public Works Administration (PWA), it would be the first national peacetime effort to create jobs, a New Deal program meant to improve the nation's infrastructure while also combating unemployment. The CWA (Civil Works Administration) was the first relief program. It started in the winter of 1933, and lasted until it was absorbed into the Emergency Relief Administration (ERA) in July of 1934.

Joyner's report dated January 10, 1935, was his first since May, 1933, because so much of his time was spent organizing, implementing, and overseeing construction projects at DTNM. Those responsibilities, along with the fact that he had no clerical

help, created a huge gap in his documentation of activities at the national monument.

“As this report will bring out, we have been extremely busy with projects under the PWA, CWA, and ERA. This period of activity has been extremely interesting and the developments are now reaching a point where we can present most of the minimum requirements as far as standard conveniences for our visitors are concerned.”³⁸ Joyner referred to the dollars spent with these program funds as “alphabet money.”³⁹

In reporting on general weather conditions at DTNM he said:

The drought conditions affected this grazing region with the result that there is less than one-half the normal number of stock left. The work at the Devils Tower has enabled many families to procure the minimum requirements of food and clothing which they would have been hard put to find otherwise. The plant life on the national monument area suffered greatly, but the most serious effects will not be noticeable until this coming summer. Already many pines, which were perhaps already weakened, are dying.⁴⁰

Perhaps most telling of the benefit that DTNM provided to an area battered by drought and depression is in Joyner’s recap of the labor situation during the last half of 1933 through 1934:

...Incidentally it is worthy of mention that we have during these seventeen months employed 338 different men. This number represents 7% of the residents of the county or approximately 30% of the wage earners. This is pointed out to show what an economic factor our program has been and why I have at various times stressed the value at Devils Tower of increased employment.⁴¹

DURING AUGUST 1933 work began on a new equipment shed. The log structure was in use before the shingles were put on.

Two springs were developed to provide storage for water for fire protection on the west side of the national monument area. Concrete boxes and one-inch pipe were installed to carry water to a concrete storage tank. Water could then be drawn into barrels on a truck by gravity feed, and transported to the fire scene.

An entrance road project began in early September 1933 as a PWA expenditure. The plan called for three miles of road and for bridge protection improvements, but the monies were insufficient and only a mile and a half of the roadway was constructed. After the side-hill cutting and through-cutting was complete, the rough grading of the roadway was accomplished using fifty head of local horses pulling dump wagons and fresnos (equipment used to scrape and move dirt). The bridge protection improvements involved construction of thirty-three concrete tetrahedrons identical to the thirty-nine previously constructed. The new tetrahedrons were installed downstream from and attached to the original group, and placed to prevent the river current from running out of the constructed channel.

The parking area construction got underway in October 1933, and involved expensive rock excavation and fill due to a shortage of dirt. It was partially completed, and the rough grading done in connection with the work on the entrance road. Finish grading and graveling would wait until spring.

A BOUNDARY FENCE for the national monument property was the subject of a long conversation Joyner had with Howard Baker, Junior Landscape Architect with the NPS, in September of 1933. Baker reported to his supervisor:

Mr. Joyner and I discussed a national monument boundary fence considerably while I was at the Tower. This project in my mind is one of most importance to the adequate protection of the National monument.

Under the present conditions the neighboring ranchers invariably insist upon grazing their cattle upon the national monument due to the abundance of feed. Should Mr. Joyner devote all of his time to the control of this factor I am afraid the results would be unnoticed. If these cattle remain to feed upon the national monument grasses all the small vegetation, including the wild flowers, will soon be gone, which seems to me an absolute defeat of the national monument purpose. With these points I recommend that this project be given preference if any further funds become available.⁴²

Baker was obviously concerned that the combination of drought and over-grazing would have a detrimental effect on the DTNM landscape.

In the winter of 1933-34, PWA project monies provided for fencing five and a half miles of the Tower boundary. Four-strand barbed wire with posts went up, along with eight steel gates, twelve wire gates, and two twelve-foot wooden cattle guards. The cattle guards had to be rebuilt with concrete and railroad ties because local residents were driving their stock and horse-drawn vehicles over the wooden structures.

Of the boundary survey to mark a fence line, Joyner said: "In connection with the boundary fence it was necessary to survey the boundary which included the location of a number of corners, considerable correspondence with the General Land Office in connection with the original surveys, and the reestablishment of several points. As generally happens we were quite surprised to find where the true boundary lay."⁴³

In November 1934 a financial allotment was received by DTNM to complete the entrance road, including grading of the other mile and a half, finish grading and graveling of the entire road, completion of the parking area grading, and necessary bridge repair items. Sixty-eight head of stock were at work in December and, except for two places, all of the heavy work was completed on the road. A contract was approved with J.J. Dolling

of Gillette, Wyoming, to furnish and stockpile the gravel needed for surfacing the road in the spring.

The following plans for continuing improvements at the Tower were prepared and either approved or awaiting approval at the NPS Director's office: parking area development; campground development; equipment shed; gasoline and oil house; entrance pylons; additional reservoir; river bank protection; guard rails. Other plans in a preliminary stage or nearing a final phase were: barn; residence alteration; development of a proposed Devils Tower Recreation Area; Tower Trail; bridge approach reconstruction.

HUGE ADVANCEMENTS WERE being made to the national monument, in ways that benefited both visitors and employees. Ideas for a DTNM expansion, to include the Little Missouri Buttes and timber land to the west and north of the Tower, were being proposed and discussed. Such an enlargement would have a recreational benefit, and protection from fire and insect infestations would be simplified if the NPS had jurisdiction over the area.

Mr. A. J. Macy, postmaster at Moorcroft, started the public discussion in June of 1935 by writing to Joyner and asking if the NPS was at all interested in enlarging the DTNM property. Macy knew of a number of people who would get behind a movement to bring this idea to the attention of the federal government. Joyner explained the NPS stand on the matter—NPS personnel could not start such a movement and there were no funds with which to buy land—but also spoke of his personal enthusiasm for such a project.

Associate Director of the NPS A. E. Demaray visited the DTNM in early July and made the determination that the only feasible way for the NPS to receive control of the proposed expansion area was as a Recreational Area Unit.

Joyner attended a meeting with various delegations of commercial clubs from Wyoming and South Dakota where he

was witness to what he termed their “unselfish enthusiasm”⁴⁴ for DTNM expansion. A committee for the enlargement project secured support from the Resettlement Administration, the NPS, the Department of the Interior, the congressional delegations of Wyoming and South Dakota, Wyoming State government, Crook County government, and landowners adjacent to the National Monument.

Since there were no funds at that time to purchase the proposed expansion area the idea had to be tabled until a request for money could be brought before the next session of the U. S. Congress.

THE FEDERAL RELIEF program Emergency Conservation Work, commonly referred to as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), had been established to relieve the acute condition of widespread unemployment and help restore the country’s depleted natural resources with an orderly program of useful public works.

Robert Fechner, the first Director of ECW, wrote:

At the time the CCC was initiated, the sponsors of this new venture in social relief stated that its major objectives were to give jobs to hundreds of thousands of discouraged and undernourished young men, idle through no fault of their own, to build up these young men physically and spiritually, and to start the nation on a sound conservation program which would conserve and expand our timbered resources, increase recreational opportunities and reduce the annual toll taken by forest fire, disease, pests, soil erosion and floods.⁴⁵

Four government departments—War, Interior, Agriculture, and Labor—would cooperate in managing the program, and the Veterans Administration would be responsible for selecting the veterans’ quota of enrollees for the program. There were special provisions in the ECW for veterans, and older locally-enlisted men would be employed as foremen. It was the job of

this advisory council to mobilize the unemployed and to get the men quickly to work on the projects which would not only enhance the present value of national resources, but which would also increase the usefulness of these resources for future generations.

When first established, the CCC's primary concern was the nation's forest land, which included a prevention policy for forest fires, floods, soil erosion, and plant disease and pest control. The groups were to construct, maintain, and repair paths and trails in the national parks and forests, along with similar work in some state forest lands. These goals were greatly expanded in scope to include helping in historic excavations and stabilization of buildings and ruins; building roads, trails, park buildings, campgrounds, picnic areas, picnic tables, fireplaces, signs, exhibits, and other park structures; erecting telephone poles and electric lights; and helping during natural disasters.

The national program called for enrollees to be paid \$30 a month, with assistant leaders earning \$36.00 and appointed leaders \$45.00. \$25.00 from each paycheck would be sent directly to the families of those serving in the CCC camps. Room and board were included in the enrollees' term of service. The cumulative positive effect of the outdoor life, good food, and healthful work on enrollees showed an average weight gain of more than seven pounds per man during a six-month period (from 14,000 enrollees selected at random from all sections of the United States).

In June of 1934, Joyner made an application for a camp of approximately 200 men. Equipment began arriving early in April, 1935, and on June 16 construction started on a permanent CCC camp at the Tower, Camp NM-I-W. In July members of Company 8444 stationed at Guernsey, WY, readied the camp for occupation.

The first group of workers, Company 3851 from Oklahoma and numbering 190 men, arrived at DTNM the first week of August, 1935. These men came from northeastern Oklahoma,

and Joyner considered them readily adaptable to the work at the Tower. They were stationed at DTNM until transferring out in late October, some to the Grand Canyon camp in Arizona and some to Guernsey.



*CCC camp on the south side of the Tower, in the river valley.
(Devils Tower National Monument)*

The next unit, Company 2555 from the Fifth Corp area in southern Kentucky, began work at the Tower in November. This group of 219 enrollees was mainly from the coal-mining region, and did not prove quite as adaptable as the Oklahoma crews. Joyner noted that there were a number of extremely young men in the Kentucky group, which he felt had a bearing on their adjustment. "Theirs is an altogether different psychology than we have previously met, but by the end of the month they had become acclimated to life in the camp and to the work projects and had gained an idea of the methods on the various projects."⁴⁶

One of the first projects for this group of enrollees was erosion control to correct conditions created by domestic stock grazing

on the national monument and the trails utilized by those animals. They also carried out maintenance work on insect control based on recommendations by Mr. Evindon of the Forest Service.

The administration building was completed with CCC help in late 1935. It included a museum room, two offices and an information booth, restroom for the offices, small quarters on the second floor, and a full basement with furnace, restroom, and a museum workshop. Joyner felt strongly that the new amenities would be a positive addition to the Tower experience: "This building, with museum exhibits in place, will be, and has already proven itself, a great asset to this area."⁴⁷

Grading and graveling of the entrance road from the boundary to the headquarters area was completed, the improved road surface being credited in part for the increased number of visitors to the parking area, it being much easier to traverse than the previous gumbo road.

Some of the CCC men assisted with ranger, naturalist, and guide services at the Tower. With their help there was someone on duty at the parking area from the middle of July to the end of the tourist season.

By February 1936, even though the previous three months' weather had slowed the work progress, most of the fine grading around the parking area and the administration building had been completed, and trees and shrubs had been transplanted. Flagstone walks were under construction in the headquarters area, in connection with the parking area and administration building landscaping.

Joyner felt good progress had been made on the remodeling of the custodian's residence, despite the inclement weather, and that the cribbing and rock rip-rap which had been installed along the river put them in good position to handle the spring thaw. (Cribbing is a crate-like structure of wire or wood filled with rocks; rip-rap is a foundation or sustaining wall of loose rock.) The rock structures on the Belle Fourche River were to

help prevent loss of land occupied by the CCC camp and possible loss of part of the entrance road by the river overrunning its banks. A corrugated culvert was installed on the entrance road, with the old wooden box culvert removed.

Eight CCC men became ill with the mumps and were sent to Fort MacKenzie in Sheridan, Wyoming, in the company ambulance on March 8, 1936. The ambulance left the road on a straight-away approaching a bridge, killing four and seriously injuring the others. The cause of the accident remained unknown at the time of Joyner's incident report in June.

On April 1, 1936, most of the CCC enrollees returned to their homes in Kentucky, with only 66 men remaining in camp. On April 14 nearly 100 Ohio enrollees moved into camp. Joyner said "The new 'rookies' are very good workers and most of them have had at least some high school work; just the reverse of the past two groups."⁴⁸ Another 40 men from Ohio arrived in July.

An open house, held at Camp NM-1-W on May 10, 1936, was attended by 497 visitors and deemed very successful by Joyner.

The CCC national office had a national newspaper called "Happy Days" and many of the CCC camps throughout the States had a camp newspaper. The Tower camp had a mimeographed paper published bimonthly throughout most of the camp duration.

Company 2555 produced "Monument Mirror," announcing in the August 10, 1936 anniversary edition: "Cleanliness is our motto, friendship is our creed, and hard work is our job."⁴⁹ The Tower camp newspaper had six office staff members, six reporters, and found much material submitted from within the ranks of the enrollees.

Camp papers were complete with sports columns, editorials, cartoons, jokes, local news, and the popular "We Wonder" column, the "We Wonder" heading followed by such questions like "Why Fred Martin likes Barlow Canyon?," "Why they call Delbert Storms the Lemon Drop Kid?," and "Where Bill Hendrickson stays Saturday nights?"⁵⁰

An editorial by a Mr. Brandenburg addressed the thoughts of some of the homesick enrollees:

Days come and go and we are nearer to that intangible something that makes us all wish for home and our loved ones. But are we as boys doing our duty if we go home or does a little self-sacrifice on our part make mother's load a little bit lighter. Help dad through the winter and help send the smaller brothers and sisters to school to give them the chance for the education that someone had to make a sacrifice to give us?⁵¹

The "Locals" column carried tidbits of information of all sorts, but generally about camp business. One list included "All K.P.s have been rated to thirty-two dollar men," "New fire buckets have been issued to all the barracks," and "The White Tail fire is the sixteenth fire the Devils Tower camp has fought this season."⁵²

The CCC crews were of consistently good help when local firefighters needed assistance. A contingent of men from the CCC camp at Orman Dam in South Dakota were on their way to a fire near Newcastle when they were rerouted to a fire in the Bear Lodge Mountains north of Sundance. This July fire would be recorded that year as the worst in the Bear Lodge since 1878, burning 8,200 acres over almost a week before being extinguished by a heavy rain.

The DTNM camp provided assistance with a fire north of the Tower and one on Tower Divide during that same time. *Crook County News*, the Hulett newspaper, reported:

The Tower CCC boys have gained a splendid reputation as fire fighters and were employed last week in fighting the big fire over in Buckhorn country. In talking to one of the boys on Friday he said, 'We fought a fire a week ago in the Barlow Canyon, then spent five days and nights on the Newcastle fire only to get back to camp and fight two fires today. We're getting a belly full of this fire

fighting business.’ Which statement probably expresses the opinion of everyone who has had to fight the forest fire during the past week.⁵³

In October of 1936, 175 men—25 Wyoming men, the rest Oklahomans—under the command of Lt. R. S. Barker, Company 3887, arrived at DTNM and spent some weeks getting their camp in shape, then were put to work at forestry clean-up, moving and transplanting trees, bank sloping, and cribbing.

They prepared for fire duty, learning fire-hazard reduction, forest fire fighting, and fire pre-suppression. Regular crews, of 25 men each, could be ready on short notice to leave for the scene of a fire.

Company 3887’s camp newspaper was titled “Devils World.” In the January 14, 1937 issue the editor related that “The boys have been finding out, the past few days, just what winter in Wyoming can be like. They have been forced to stay in several times lately. January the fifth’s temperature of twenty-five below zero was taken advantage of to hold a fire fighting lesson for all enrollees in the recreation hall.”⁵⁴

“Devils World” had columns similar to the ones in the “Monument Mirror,” but titles changed. “Devils World” offered “Oklahoma Outburst” and “Things The Camp Would Like To Know:” “Why our first cook after taking a ten day leave came back twenty pounds underweight? Why Hair Mayhew swore off the women last week? Why ‘Wimpy’ Jones runs to ‘Rex’ McElwain every time ‘Rex’ gets a letter from Claremore? Ask him.”⁵⁵

An editorial in the January 14, 1937 issue describes well what the CCC men hoped to accomplish:

On first thought you might think it funny that over one hundred and thirty men were sent from warm Oklahoma to this cold country to spend a whole winter, just to improve a park. Your first question probably is, ‘What are they all going to do?’

When you hear that the project is divided into sixty different jobs all your doubts will be settled. 'But,' you protest, 'is it worth while to keep a whole CCC Company here all winter?'

The answer is financially our government will feel paid every cent it has put out when it has a good park to show for its money. To the men it is worth many times what is being spent. They are getting training and experience that will open roads to bigger and better things in the future.

Looking into the future: Next summer hundreds of tourists will leave DTNM in a happy and satisfied state of mind because they have seen one of the outstanding wonders of Nature. Happier still perhaps, because the park has been made more comfortable and beautiful by the efforts of the CCC boys this winter.⁵⁶

Educational programs varied considerably from camp to camp but, throughout the Corps, more than 40,000 illiterate young men were taught to read and write. Elementary subjects—reading, writing, and arithmetic—were available at the Tower camp, along with algebra, typing, journalism, and Wyoming and Oklahoma history.

Other subjects offered at one time or another during the camp occupancy were auto mechanics, blacksmithing, taxidermy, leather craft, woodworking, and first-aid. One session of classes included aviation mechanics, business management, and business arithmetic, while another session offered blueprint reading, cooking and baking, and a diesel engineering class. A lecture course in conservation, taught by Joyner and reported by his students as "without a doubt the outstanding educational achievement,"⁵⁷ was compulsory for all enrollees.

Recreation was provided with softball, baseball, volleyball, tennis, and boxing. Company 3887 had six outstanding boxers who participated in tournaments, winning six out of eight

first places in the sub-district tourney. The pool table in the recreation hall was popular, as was the ping pong table. Once a week a silent moving picture was shown, and men were granted leave on weekends.

Company 3887 helped complete the gasoline and oil house, procured logs for guard rails along the highway to the national monument, and built concrete piers for supports for the guard rails, among other projects. This group also built ninety-two picnic tables that would be enjoyed for years to follow.

The first large group to utilize the tables were picnickers at the Old Settlers' Picnic on June 20, 1937. Over 4,500 people attended the annual meeting of the Northern Black Hills Pioneer Association, as did practically every man from the Company. They socialized throughout the afternoon, enjoying speakers, music provided by the Gillette, Wyoming High School Band, vocal numbers, and a baseball game.

Shortly after, the CCC camp at the Tower was disbanded, with Company 3887 leaving in September.

WITH ALL OF those young men living at DTNM throughout the CCC years, it is hard to imagine that not one of them tried to climb the Tower, but there is no record, no documentation found, to indicate that any of the men even attempted to reach the top.

The first recorded or verified climb of the Tower since Babe White's ascent in 1927 took place on June 28, 1937. Fritz Wiessner and Lawrence Coveney from New York, and William P. House from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, were the first to free-climb the Tower using alpine mountaineering methods. All were members of the American Alpine Club, based in New York City, an organization founded in 1902 and devoted to mountaineering, climbing, and issues concerning both activities.

Special permission for the climb had been obtained from the NPS office in Washington. Wiessner and Coveney had been at the Tower the previous summer, but had been unable to get permission then to make a climb.

Wiessner, the lead climber, was born in Dresden, Germany, in 1900, immigrated to America in 1929, and became a U.S. citizen in 1935. He started climbing with his father in the Austrian Alps, and at age twelve climbed the Zugspitze, the highest peak in Germany. Before climbing the Tower he had climbed not only in the Alps, but also in the Himalayas, and the Rocky Mountains of Canada, United States, and Mexico. His climb of Mt. Waddington, in British Columbia, was featured in the December 14, 1937, issue of *Life* magazine.

Coveney, considered by Wiessner to be an experienced and highly technical climber, had climbed extensively, although the Tower would be his first major ascent. House, a graduate of Yale College of Forestry, was a member of Wiessner's party in the Waddington climb, and had climbed in the Alps, the Tetons, and Mexico.

Before attempting their Tower climb, the three stopped near Harney Peak in the South Dakota Black Hills and climbed two of the spires of The Needles to prepare them for the more difficult Tower climb. They arrived at the Tower in late afternoon, spent some time in a reconnaissance of the south side of the Tower, and completed their plans for the ascent.

At 6:30 a.m. the next morning they made their way over 200 feet of the talus slope to where the columns rise almost perpendicularly at the base. By 11:18 a.m. they were on the top and spent thirty minutes collecting samples of the flora and rocks as requested by Joyner. They took pictures and noted points of scientific interest, then began the descent and were met by Joyner at the base of the Tower at 1:30 p.m. Both ascent and descent were made by the same route on the south side of the Tower, now known as the Wiessner Route. (Pseudo Wiessner, the Extended Wiessner, and Fritz's Fantasy were established and named by later climbers.)

Wiessner, Coveney, and House all agreed they had completed a difficult climb. Wiessner added that there were few places in the Alps as difficult to climb as one part on the Tower where they

had to traverse a chimney for eighty feet. Wiessner led the climb, as a certain technique is required for climbing up cracks and he was an expert. Coveney said, "Wiessner looked over the crack when we got to the overhanging ledge, and said 'I think it goes.' I wasn't so sure, but Wiessner led us up in as magnificent a piece of mountain climbing as I have ever seen."⁵⁸

Only one piton was used in the climb, and Wiessner later thought it unnecessary and wished he had not used it. A piton is a small iron pin, with an eye on one end. When the piton is driven into a small crack in the rock, a carabiner (snap ring) is fastened into the eye, and a rope threaded through the carabiner. With the alpine mountaineering climbing method, no actual climbing is done with the aid of the rope or piton—they serve as safety aids in the case of an accident.

The climbers wore hiking clothes with wool socks and low canvas climbing shoes with heavy hempen soles, which gave them sure footing and still allowed them to feel the crevices with their feet. They each carried a safety rope made of the best quality Italian hemp, tested to one-and-a-half tons and able to stretch 20 to 25 feet, acting as a restraint for the climber in case of a fall.

Joyner wanted to hear what was found on the top of the Tower. The trio had gathered specimens for him—tufts of grass, sagebrush, cactus in bloom, ferns, some small rocks, and a Mormon cricket—and took photos, paced off measurements, and constructed a small cairn in which they placed an empty grapefruit juice can and their names. They reported the following to Joyner:

The area at the top is oval in shape with the long axis north-south as represented on the topographic map of the U.S. Geological Survey. The paced dimensions are 200 feet east-west by 400 feet north-south.

The top is a dome-shaped oval, the entire top sloping up to a central point almost exactly in its middle, 15 feet higher than the periphery.

The columns are exposed in end-sections around the periphery of the top, but most of the center portion is covered with top soil that appears to be the product of disintegration of the rock in situ. No transported soil was recognized. Because of this top soil no observations could be made of the rock structure at the center of the Tower.

Approximately the upper 200 feet of the Tower show much deeper weathering and rock disintegration than that below. Weathering at the top was described as distinctly 'slabby' which suggest typical exfoliation. The samples of weathered rock collected appear to be identical to that of the rest of the Tower.

The only evidence that any one else had climbed the Tower was the old flagstaff which Ripley and Rogers carried up in sections on that first climb on the Fourth of July, 1893.⁵⁹

Joyner met the climbers and gave them water immediately upon their descent. Among those congratulating the climbers was Dollie Heppler, whose first husband, Willard Ripley, constructed the ladder for the 1893 climb. No announcement of the Wiessner climb had been made—the event was an exciting surprise for the visitors who happened to be at the Tower that day.

Wiessner said of the Tower climb:

I wouldn't recommend that any one except an experienced mountain climber attempt the trip we made. It is an extremely difficult climb for 200 feet and to one who does not know mountain climbing it would be practically impossible to reach the top. A serious accident would be very likely to result. There is only one pitch on the north face of the Grand Teton in Wyoming which is as difficult in its way, as this crack is on the Devils Tower.⁶⁰

Wiessner gave his climbing shoes, a piton, a carabiner, and a short piece of rope to DTNM, all of which remain in the museum collection.

Wiessner continued to make a name for himself in the climbing world. In 1939 Wiessner led an expedition to K2 in the Himalayas. K2 is Earth's second-highest peak and among the top three hardest climbs in the world. With a 28,250-foot summit and surrounding weather that is significantly colder and less predictable than on Everest, reaching the top of K2 and coming down alive is every experienced mountaineer's dream.

Wiessner's 15-member K2 ascent team was reduced to five by Camp VII, and three days later it was just Wiessner and his Nepali guide. They were only 656 feet from the summit when the guide became consumed with fears of waking the angry gods of the mountain. Wiessner recounted that, although the difficulties of the climb had been passed and the remainder was straightforward, he turned back in deference to the wishes of his guide, who feared offending the gods by being on the summit in darkness.

They descended to camp, both men losing their crampons on the way; during the night the snow froze into ice, and an attempt to reach the summit the next day proved fruitless.

No one would come close to the top of K2 again until July 31, 1954. Had Fritz Wiessner made it to the summit he would have been the first man to set foot on a 26,000-plus foot peak, eleven years before the successful summit of Annapurna (a mountain in Nepal, the tenth-highest peak in the world). He would also have been recorded as conquering the world's second tallest mountain without the use of supplemental oxygen, a feat 40 years ahead of its time.

Wiessner once wrote, "What you may be offered in a moment all eternity will never give you back."⁶¹ He may have had regrets about K2, but his accomplishments were remarkable, and found a place in the history of mountaineering. Wiessner remained an active climber up into his 80s and died after suffering a series of strokes at age 88.



A – Wiessner Route; B – Durrance Route. View of the south side, with the leaning column. (Devils Tower National Monument)

THE IMPULSE FOR another group of climbers to scale the Tower was somewhat explained in an article by Harrison Butterworth in *Appalachia*: “The part-superstition that ‘what man has done, man can do’ acts as a challenge to mountain-climbers as strongly as it does to the rest of mankind, and the excellent climb made on Devils Tower, last summer, by Fritz Wiessner and his party, plainly invited an attempt to duplicate it.”⁶²

Jack Durrance received permission for a team to climb the Tower, from the NPS Washington office early in the summer of 1938. (Until 1960, climbing the Tower required permission from the Director of the NPS and the Secretary of the Interior.) The climbing party included Butterworth, Dick Durrance, and “Chap” Cranmer. However, by the beginning of September, their appointed time for the trip, Dick was detained elsewhere and Cranmer had a problem with his wisdom teeth.

Two other men traveled to the Tower with Durrance and Butterworth, but Joyner felt obliged to refuse climbing permission for them, since they had not been approved to climb by the NPS director. For most of one afternoon the men worked their way around the Tower until Durrance determined where to make the climb. It became evident that the only feasible routes would be in the southwest corner, repeating, or parallel to, the Wiessner ascent. Butterworth noted:

On the east side of this corner the slope is no worse than elsewhere on the Tower, and here the great columns that form the laccolith are particularly articulated to leave cracks between of a proper size for climbing.

The day’s outing was concluded with a climb from the ground-level on the east side up to the ledge from which the serious climbing on the columns begins, and closer scrutiny was made of the wall above. No one said very much.

That evening we supped on a chicken bought from the

local store, and sacrificed rather Homerically for the occasion, and then slept in the moonlight under the pines. I remember it occurred to me, for one, that home was quite far away, as the great rock loomed above us in the night sky.⁶³

Durrance and Butterworth started climbing at seven o'clock the next morning. The pitches to begin with were short but fairly steep. The plan was to climb near the Wiessner route, and another couple of pitches brought the men to the top of the pillar which runs beside and immediately to the south of the long column of the Wiessner climb. Durrance was pondering their next move when a storm broke out and wet the ropes. They lowered themselves in two rappels and spent the night in the basement of the ranger station, where they could dry their ropes.

At daybreak they were back on the Tower, and Durrance began the climb from a slightly different point, at the base of the leaning column. Here, the short slope appeared less severe than the rest, and led up to another section of column leaning diagonally against the side of the Tower. This time they achieved the summit, establishing what has become the classic Tower climb, the Durrance Route.

Durrance was born in Florida in 1912, and grew up in Vermont and Bavaria. He attended Dartmouth College as a pre-med student and in 1939 founded the Dartmouth Mountaineering Club. He completed his medical training in 1943, and sometime in the 1940s he left the climbing world to devote time to his family (he and his wife had five children), medicine (he became chief of the pulmonary division at the Denver Veterans Hospital), and his passion as an iris horticulturist. He served as president of the American Iris Society and co-founded the Denver Botanical Gardens. Durrance passed away in 2003.

THE PROPOSAL, IN the fall of 1938, to seal coat the entire roadway and parking area of the national monument may have been the smoothest contract work ever completed at the

Tower. Bids were opened on September 2, 1938.

The contract was awarded to Northwestern Engineering Company of Rapid City, South Dakota, and approved by the Secretary of the Interior, September 29. The Notice to Proceed was mailed on September 30, and acknowledged by the contractor on October 3.

A gravel pit had been selected and approved on private property about four miles north of the DTNM entrance, and the contractor, at his own expense, had already set up a gravel crushing and screening plant and had started to crush gravel. The crushed gravel was processed through the plant twice to screen out all the dust.

Northwestern began actual oiling operations on October 4 and the entire seal coat was placed by October 8. The contractor was required to maintain the seal coat for ten days, concluding the contract on October 18. Joyner's report stated that Northwestern had first-class, up-to-date machinery—all the asphalt tank trucks were equipped with internal oil-burning heaters which issued hot uniform asphalt at all times with no delay.

The contract price with Northwestern was \$4,049.00 on a unit price basis. Available funds for the work were \$4,250.00 and the amount actually paid the contractor was \$4,091.39. Excellent work completed in record time and under budget.

IN NOVEMBER OF 1937 Joyner received a letter from John P. Harrington, ethnologist with the Smithsonian Institution, asking for information for a report he was preparing regarding Indian stories about the Tower. Harrington's first paragraph began a correspondence that would last a year and a half: "... Will you please be so very good as to answer all the questions immediately and to get your answers into the mail at the earliest possible moment. ... Do not wait to find out about things you do not know well, but send back what information you know as quick as you can get it in the mail, please."⁶⁴ Harrington gave no reason for his hurry to receive information.

Joyner responded with a three-page letter in early December of 1937, answering point by point each of Harrington's questions, with a postscript of his own: "We would be pleased to incorporate in our library any material concerning the Tower which appears in print."⁶⁵ Joyner made every attempt, and took every opportunity, to gather material pertinent to the Tower.

In March 1939, after months of correspondence, Joyner typed three single-spaced pages of exposition on Harrington's questions about Baking Creek, Burnt Hollow Creek, Redwater Creek, Ice-box Canyon, and their locations relative to the Tower, and clarified the climbing route of the 1938 Durrance climb.

Joyner ends his letter:

I could write more, and express further opinions, and perhaps give you some more leads. But maybe you have all the information you desire. If there is anything further I can do, please write, for it appears now as though we would have some additional permanent help here after the first of July, and until that time I'll be able to keep on top of the 'must' material which is naturally placed above the things I am personally most interested in, such as the privilege of learning what you are uncovering and the privilege of corresponding with you.⁶⁶

The Tower records do not indicate any further correspondence, or if a copy of the article Harrington was writing ever reached DTNM.

ONE JOB APPROVED under the CCC program, but not started before the camp was disbanded, was a four-and-a-half mile nature trail proposal. The idea was resurrected, with some revision of the original plan, and a new completion date of June, 1940.

One mile of the proposed route followed an abandoned, undeveloped truck trail, and portions of the proposed trail in other areas would follow old game and stock trails. The plan called for ten simple log signs to be placed at important points

on the trail, noting vistas, the junction with the trail around the Tower, and permanent geological features.

The narrative of the proposal gives a clear picture of what the national monument staff hoped to accomplish with the nature trail:

The purpose of this trail is to encourage the visitor to do something more than walk around the Tower itself. The route gives several different views of the Tower—it passes along the sandstone cliffs and over the Red Beds and through the oak woods and over Fossil Hill; along this route may be gained geological facts of a simple nature relating the composition of the strata underlying the Tower; fossil material such as ripple marks, rain-drop patterns, an extensive bed of heavily fossiliferous limestone, and the spot where a dinosaur bone was picked up sometime ago; structural forms such as unconformities, cross-bedded strata, box-work resulting from wind erosion in sandstone cliffs, layers of unaltered mud in the sandstone beds; shale, sandstone, clay, quartzite, limestone; in the field of biology seven distinct ecological associations may be observed; plants and animals which cannot be seen at the Headquarters area may be studied. The trail will be of considerable interest to the nature student and it is our hope that it will also contribute to the efforts of those of us who wish that more people may have their 'eyes opened to the out-of-doors.'⁶⁷

A nature trail with so much to offer seemed a worthwhile goal for a national park area. The trail was constructed and its official name became "Red Beds Trail."

Devils Tower at a glance...

1931 ~ 1940

Custodian: ~ George C. Crowe 1931 - 1932

Newell F. Joyner 1932 - 1940

Visitors: ~ 240,136

Climbers: ~ 15

Chapter V

1941 - 1950

1941 ~ Japanese attack Pearl Harbor

1943 ~ Oklahoma on Broadway

*1945 ~ U.S. drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima
and Nagasaki*

1948 ~ State of Israel created

1950 ~ Korean War begins

TWO AERIAL VIEWS OF THE TOWER, ONE OF THEM SHOWING the Little Missouri Buttes in the background, were given to Devils Tower National Monument (DTNM) in January of 1941 by Charles Belden, a noted photographer of Pitchfork, Wyoming. Joyner thought the picture with the Buttes the best one he had seen, and felt it would be of value in the interpretive work at the national monument. Tower personnel also had the opportunity to see a bobcat which had been trapped to the west of the Tower. A bobcat presence on national monument grounds had been noted, but it was not possible to determine which of the three possible species of lynx it might be. The trapped animal was identified as *Lynx uintah* (mountain bobcat).

Joyner reported the election of Mrs. Anna Richards, wife of the DTNM clerk Dwight Richards, as president of the local

Homemakers' Club. He had a strong belief in the importance of staff and their families being involved in the local communities; he knew this created ties and understandings that might not be accomplished otherwise.

The Tower staff said goodbye to Gallatin C. "Judge" Tate who had been General Foreman of the first CWA crew in the fall of 1933, and had worked with Joyner over the years on the improvements at the national monument. With the apparent cessation of the ERA projects in the Tower area, Tate and his family moved to California where jobs were more plentiful. He had a job within a week. Tate had successfully passed the Park Ranger examination and the Handyman examination, and Joyner regretted not being able to utilize Tate's skills at DTNM.

Attending a NPS conference in Rocky Mountain National Park in February of 1941 gave Joyner some needed perspective about the DTNM. He reported to the Director:

A great deal of material which was purely of an informative nature, but which will be of assistance in the future, was acquired; but probably best of all was the opportunity for the pooling of ideas and the broadening of vision—an opportunity for which is certainly lacking in an area so isolated from other units of the Service as is the case here. I returned with a thousand good ideas which I would like to put into effect; however, as happens subsequent to any conference, a great many of these good ideas will not be carried out because of the presence of immediate affairs.¹

A new ERA project was to begin in early March 1941, and Mr. Baggle, Area Manager of the WPA (Works Progress Administration) Division of Operations, visited the Tower to determine what action Crook County might need to take to ensure that county people certified to work for the WPA were employed. Joyner found himself in the position of assisting the County Commissioners by reopening the project—the county

was reluctant to spend the money necessary to operate a WPA project and DTNM could carry the load for the county. This project would expend the balance of the 1940 ERA funds, allowing for completion of some jobs that would be difficult to finish under the regular park budget. It also would supply jobs to local workers who otherwise had no income. Joyner recognized the need existing among residents of the county.

Ben Colvin, who had worked intermittently at the Tower for about eight years, became the new ERA project foreman. Joyner felt fortunate to have someone in that position who was familiar with the area, and resumption of the program began with unpacking tools, fixing up the trucks which had been stored, and taking care of other small details necessary to begin work. By the end of March, the project—demolition of the CCC camp cook shack—was nearly completed, with salvageable materials ready to be hauled away.

During the month of March, Joyner made a trip to Sundance to give a few complimentary DTNM entrance permits to county officials and to visit with people who had expressed interest in helping form a natural history association at DTNM. Joyner also reported, “The Mountain Blue Bird returned on the 19th. Robins were first seen on the 29th, as were two or three Mourning Cloak Butterflies. On the 30th the first group of Pasque Flowers was found in bloom and the Buttercup were ready to open. The grass on the river bottoms is starting to spread a green carpet.”²

On March 19, 1941, the Headquarters Troop of the Fourth Cavalry from Fort Meade, S.D., spent time at DTNM on routine maneuvers. Captain Rose, the commander of the company, made plans to bring the entire troop for an all-night stay in April. Joyner helped him find a location which would not disturb any protected features of the national monument and still provide adequate facilities for the troop.

During the month of April, the Tower received about five-and-a-half inches of precipitation—wet snow in the early part of the month, and rain during the last week. The Belle Fourche River

was the highest it had been for several years, but did not reach flood stage. Clerk Dwight Richards, who prepared the April report, stated, "People are saying 'this is more like old times' here, meaning, as we understand it, more nearly when the land, proverbially speaking, 'flowed with milk and honey.'"³

Joyner traveled to Laramie to make the selection of temporary rangers for the coming season, and while there spoke with two members of the University's faculty, Mr. Otto McCreary and O. A. Beath. McCreary was considered a foremost authority on Wyoming avifauna, and donated a copy of his book, *Wyoming Bird Life*, to the Tower library. Beath, noted for his research on selenium, gave DTNM several pamphlets titled *Selenious Areas*.

Back in Sundance, Joyner attended a tourist informational school sponsored by State of Wyoming. The school was to familiarize persons such as service station attendants, waitresses, and other summer help with the features of the state. He presented a review of the geological features of the Sundance area, as he said, "attempting to 'make geology live' . . . Of course, Devils Tower received our special emphasis and Kodachrome slides, especially those showing [the Tower] in sunset dress, received comment."⁴

In September 1941 Chief Electrician Seasholtz, of the Coordinating Superintendent's Office of the NPS, and accompanied by Lineman George Mullan, spent a few days at the Tower installing a short-wave radio for experimental use in communicating with Yellowstone National Park. The two men also spent time checking the DTNM buildings' electrical systems, eliminating some hazardous grounds within the wiring in the office and residence.

James Perry Wilson, artist, and Raymond DeLucia, preparator from the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, visited the Tower to gather information for the mule deer group exhibit being developed at their museum. They were choosing interesting areas for the settings for various mammals, and selected the Tower environs to use for the mule deer. The

men prepared studies and collected material to be used for the background and foreground of the exhibit. The foggy weather throughout late September and early October delayed their work and extended their stay.

THE FOGGY WEATHER also created a more hazardous situation when George Hopkins dropped by parachute to the top of the Tower on the first day of October, 1941.

With America's involvement in a war looming, the story about a parachutist trapped on top of the Tower gave readers a lighthearted respite from the gloom of current news. The country's leading newspapers, including *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times*, and local papers in Wyoming, kept the Tower on the front page for nearly two weeks.

George Hopkins arrived in Rapid City, South Dakota, from his home in Texas to stage a parachute-jumping show at the Rapid City airport, where he would try to reclaim the world's record for the greatest number of jumps in one day. Hopkins had served as a pilot with the Royal Air Force, and assisted in the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940, transporting Allied troops across the English Channel. He was well-known for his ability as a stunt-pilot, but Hopkins also held many parachuting records, including the most jumps recorded (2,347), a jump from the highest elevation (26,400 feet), and the longest delayed jump (20,800 feet).

Hopkins met with Earl Brockelsby, who owned Reptile Gardens, and Bob Dean, owner of KOTA, a local radio station. Brockelsby was working with the Rapid City Chamber of Commerce on the air show to raise money for a hospital.

Two weeks before, Brockelsby had bet Hopkins \$50.00 that he could not parachute to the top of the Tower. Hopkins liked to prove that the impossible was possible, and his attempt would generate publicity for the air show.

Once Hopkins jumped to the top of the Tower, he planned to remain there for an hour and a half, just long enough for Dean to put the story on the radio. After Brockelsby had gathered some

reporters at the Tower, Hopkins jumped from 800 feet above the Tower summit and 200 feet to its side. Although he had to partially deflate his chute to reach his mark, he won the bet, landing on the one-and-a-half-acre top of the Tower.



George Hopkins and his parachute atop the Tower

His success achieved one goal of the three men—to show that an experienced jumper could land exactly where he wanted to. His pilot, Joe Quinn, then made another pass over the Tower to drop 1000 feet of rope for Hopkins to use to descend. But the rope slithered down the side of the Tower and landed on a ledge below the top. The hour and a half turned into half a day, then two days, and became front page news throughout the States.

“This started out as a publicity stunt, but it backfired, then wildfired,” said Brockelsby. “I’m worried about George.”⁵

The jump was made without the permission of the NPS. Edmund B. Rogers, Regional Coordinator of the NPS and

Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, said, "This is the kind of stunt we are not sympathetic with. We of the park service hate to jeopardize our men's lives for a stunt somebody thought was smart."⁶

Joyner was informed about what was going on and saw Hopkins on the summit about 8:15 a.m., shortly after Hopkins landed on the Tower. He tracked down Brockelsby and discussed the situation. The flaws in their plan for Hopkins' descent were obvious to Joyner.

The rope that the pilot Quinn had dropped to the top was to be used by Hopkins to pull up an axle, sharpened on one end, a pulley, and a sledgehammer. Hopkins would drive the axle into the top of the Tower, tie the rope off, and use the pulley to lower himself down the side of the Tower. When the rope landed on a ledge over the side, Hopkins needed a new plan.

Quinn headed back toward Rapid City, landing at the Spearfish airport to tell local pilot Clyde Ice, "There's a boy on Devils Tower." Ice said, "I didn't believe him. Until I flew over the rock and saw Hopkins there."⁷ Quinn went on to Rapid City, and Ice became the primary pilot helping Joyner.

Another rope and a grappling hook were to be dropped to Hopkins that first day by pilot Ice, in the hopes he could pull up the first rope, get it untangled, and make a descent on his own. Ice figured a Tower drop posed some unique problems due to sudden updrafts that could cause problems for his 65-horsepower plane. So, when he flew in to drop the second rope, he cut the motor, glided close to the Tower while his flying partner tossed out the rope, then restarted the engine. Hopkins got the first rope to the top, but the mass of tangles was going to take some time to sort out.

Hopkins would be spending the night on the Tower, so Ice returned just before dark to drop blankets, food, a tarpaulin, and a note promising they would get him off the next day. A storm moved in, and the temperature dropped. Local rancher John Woods, watching from the base of the Tower, said, "A fog cloud

moved in and just cut him [Hopkins] off from sight. Sure would have made me feel lonesome up there.”⁸

Joyner learned that Hopkins did not know how to use rope hitches around the body, and had planned to work his way down a rope using a hand-over-hand technique. Notes that Hopkins threw down from the top indicated that he was doing okay, but that his arms and legs felt weak. Those two factors led Joyner to a firm decision: Hopkins would not be climbing down by himself.

The next day Ice dropped a bearskin-lined flying suit, a megaphone, and a medium rare T-bone steak. Ice became a lifeline for Hopkins, braving the updrafts and crosswinds to glide within feet of the summit, and drop packages to the top of the Tower. The doors on Ice’s plane were removed to facilitate tossing the packages out. Neva Esmary or Allen Kohan rode with Ice to manage the deliveries, and every drop they made fell near Hopkins.

BY THAT AFTERNOON over a thousand sightseers, photographers, press and radio reporters had gathered at the base of the Tower. News wires buzzed with the saga of “Devils Tower George,” with *Time* and *Newsweek* running feature stories on the episode.

Joyner had many suggestions given to him on the best, easiest, safest, most cost-effective way to rescue Hopkins. He also had many suggestions that were ridiculous, poorly thought out, or increased the danger to Hopkins or the would-be rescuers. Helicopters were still in their experimental stage (a production helicopter would not be built until 1942) and Joyner’s discussions with pilots deemed a Coast Guard rescue plane unsuitable. Joyner thought the most feasible option was to send a team of climbers up to guide Hopkins down.

The Goodyear blimp, Reliance, which was based in Akron, Ohio, was offered to the NPS for use in the rescue. L. E. Judd, public relations director for the Goodyear company, thought the blimp the most practical and safest method of getting Hopkins

down, and the plan received approval from the president of the Goodyear board of directors, T. W. Litchfield.

With no landing fields available en route for the blimp, it would be accompanied by a 12-man ground crew with a portable mooring mast. Veteran balloonist J. A. Boettner would be chief pilot, and assisted by three other Goodyear company pilots. The helium-inflated blimp would have to stop to refuel every 600 miles, its speed limited by the pace of the ground crew.

The airship could land on the top of the Tower or hover above it if the air was quiet. If a wind was blowing it might be necessary to drop Hopkins a rope ladder, or perhaps a rope harness, and haul him up to the cabin.

However, there was one condition: Goodyear would not send the blimp unless they could be assured that only the blimp would make the rescue. NPS officials reasoned the five-day trip for the blimp, with no surety that it could then make the rescue, was not the most prudent use of their time and energy.

Ernest K. Field, a ranger from Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado, and Warren Gorrell, a licensed climbing guide from Colorado, were Joyner's first choice to attempt a rescue climb. In a story detailing the Hopkins rescue published in the December, 1941, issue of *Trail and Timberline*, Field makes note of their options:

Only two feasible climbing routes exist on this towering laccolith. The first was pioneered by Fritz Wiessner in 1937, and involved negotiating a perpendicular crack about six inches in width and seventy feet in length. Although I have never seen the famous 'Mummery Crack' on the north face of the Grepon, and know no more about other famous climbs than one reads in books, Wiessner's climb of this crack must have been one of the most outstanding rock climbing achievements in climbing history. In other words, this route was far, far, beyond our ability.

We therefore turned our attentions to the second route that was pioneered by Jack Durrance in 1938. The key to this climb is a sixty-foot vertical pitch about half way up the Tower involving two adjacent vertical cracks about three feet apart. This route seemed to be less difficult than Wiessner's.⁹

After climbing to the base of the 60-foot pitch, and trying to ascend the pitch without success, they established a fixed rope and descended.

They learned from Joyner that Durrance, at that time attending Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, had sent a wire to DTNM volunteering his services if they were needed. After discussing the circumstances, everyone came to the general agreement that Durrance should be summoned.

The next day was spent securing a 30-foot wooden extension ladder to the Tower to shorten the sixty-foot pitch, and save time for Durrance when he began his climb. The following day they did more work on and above the ladder, and Frank Heppler, the DTNM mechanic, made up some heavy iron spikes. These could be used in the deep vertical cracks that were too wide and deep for an ordinary piton.

Drawn to the drama at the Tower by two-inch headlines in the Wyoming newspapers were Paul Petzoldt, a veteran Grand Teton climber, and Harold Rapp, a seasonal ranger from Grand Teton National Park. They arrived in a snow-covered car, and as Rapp remembers, "When we got to Devils Tower a sleet storm had gone through the area. The Tower was nothing but a sheet of glass."¹⁰

Durrance made it to the Tower about midnight on Sunday, October 5, amid sirens and flashing lights in a cavalcade of police and highway patrol vehicles. He and Merrill McLane, a fellow Dartmouth student, had traveled by plane to Chicago. However, storms in the Midwest had canceled all flights out of that city, so they boarded a train bound for Denver. Henry Coulter and Chappell Cranmer, friends of Durrance and McLane, joined

them in Denver, where they continued to the Tower by car. The rescue was set for daylight.

At 7:30 a.m. on Monday Durrance took the lead up the Tower, tied onto a 125-foot rope with Petzoldt and Rapp. Field, Gorrell, and Cranmer were on a second rope, and McLane and Coulter on a third. The weather was cold and damp. Durrance climbed facing the wall, utilizing friction holds on the sloping column faces. As he progressed he hammered wooden pegs and metal pitons into the rock, thinking that they might have to lower Hopkins down the side of the Tower. The string of climbers followed him to the Meadows. By 4:15 p.m. all eight were on the Tower, enjoying with Hopkins the lunch Mrs. Joyner had prepared for them.

Field's account of the half-way point of the rescue tells it well:

It was an interesting contrast to step on to the top of the Tower after having climbed on the vertical walls for several hours. We all had the impression of being on an island in the sky. The top resembles an acre and a half of any typical Wyoming prairie with a few rocks thrown in. It is covered with sage brush, grass and cactus plants.

Hopkins, of course, was glad to see us. He seemed entirely nonchalant and not a bit worse for wear. He was very well equipped. During his five day isolation he had been dropped everything that he needed, and from the looks of the top of the Tower, quite a lot of things he didn't need. Some of the things in evidence were several blankets, a tent, a fur-lined flying suit, boots and helmet, gloves, hot water bottles, chemical heating pads, a portable stove, coal and wood, a flashlight, an axe, a camera, and about enough food to outfit a country store.¹¹

At 4:45 p.m. they started the descent, coming down the Tower in a series of secured rappels. Rapp and Durrance stayed behind

to clean up debris, then followed the others. Hopkins had no experience in climbing, but the rescuers later gave high praise to his quick grasp of rappelling techniques. The last part of the descent was made in the glare of floodlights from a sound equipment truck belonging to the radio station KLZ out of Denver, and spotlights from two highway patrol cars. Joyner's report captured the scene:

Through cooperation of NBC representatives, sufficient extension cord was produced to enable us to carry the flood light almost to the base of the cliff. We must admit the dramatic effect of talking to and hearing the climbers on the side of Devils Tower who were enveloped in darkness or semi-gloom and whose position we could not see; the effect of the lights on the side of the Tower; the sudden appearance as from nowhere of a climber sliding down the rope into the beam of the spot light; and the appearance and constant murmur of the crowd gathered around several large warming fires.¹²

All of the climbers reached the base of the Tower by 8:20 p.m. Hopkins had been stranded on top for six days.

Hopkins, Brockelsby, and Joyner met reporters who were waiting to interview "Devils Tower George." Hopkins stated he had wanted to "let the people know just what a person can do with a parachute if they really know their parachutes."¹³ He wondered about the great fuss over getting him off the Tower, when he felt the real feat was his landing on the top.

In his 20-page, single-spaced typewritten report on the event, Joyner said he marveled at the stamina and cheerfulness of Hopkins, was disgusted at the curiosity seekers who hoped to see a tragic event, and amazed at the lack of drinking by members of the press during the week. He further noted:

Hopkins' condition was remarkable, I believe, in view of the hazards which he could not escape. The wind blew continuously; he was unprotected from the weather

except such protection as he could get on the lee side of a small boulder; his blankets were sopping wet; he had gotten little rest or sleep; and he had had very little drinking water. It is my belief that a normal person would have been affected by the thoughts of being marooned, but Hopkins nature is such as to make him take things as they come. It was the same trait which enabled him to master the art of rappelling on the descent and which no doubt enabled him to make a successful parachute landing on top of Devils Tower. Casual observers or people from a distance have referred to him as 'cocky'. I never once saw anything which indicated cockiness. He was seriously aware of the fact that he had endangered the lives of his rescuers and of the pilot who delivered his food and supplies, and I am convinced that he would have attempted any means of getting himself off the top of the Tower which we would have permitted or ordered, even though he realized that to do so might be the equivalent of committing suicide, rather than to have caused harm to come to anyone else.¹⁴

Joyner gleaned some insights about Hopkins' character. At one point in the week Joyner wanted to air-drop some traps to Hopkins to gather some scientific specimens from the packrats, mice, and chipmunks on the top. Hopkins replied he would hate to trap the rodents because he had been feeding them and they were pets to him. Joyner also noticed that the bottle of whiskey dropped to the top of the Tower the first day was untouched when Hopkins was rescued.

Joyner organized the rescue and kept order on the ground with the help of the Wyoming Highway Patrol, the Boy Scouts, and rangers from other parks. He estimated that 7,000 people visited DTNM during the week of the incident.

The cost of Hopkins' rescue, approximately \$2,000 and paid by Brockelsby, included all local bills, all services, and the expenses of the rescue workers. Joyner felt any remaining costs

to the government were minimal, and of little consequence.

Hopkins participated in the air show in Rapid City, with Quinn as his pilot, but was forced to quit after thirteen jumps. He endured hard landings due to high winds, and a close call in his third jump, when his main chute folded into two sections instead of ballooning open, and his emergency chute tangled with the first. The chute finally twisted free, but he landed unusually hard, battering his ankles and bruising him from head to toe.

During World War II Hopkins enlisted in the Army and helped train paratroopers until he was put in charge of the experimental work of making drops behind enemy lines. After the war he flew for the Department of the Interior and the Mexican Federal Police, and staged air shows for charity.

His shows specialized in, among other things, crashing planes and wing-walking. Then he quit flying and jumping: "I was doing an air show in Mexico one day in 1958, and I was flying on my back about sixty feet off the deck when I suddenly asked myself what I was doing there. No special problem—I wasn't in any kind of trouble. I just landed and walked away, and I haven't been up since."¹⁵

“**W**AR! WE AT Devils Tower pledge ourselves to make such savings and adjustments as we are called upon to make; to keep on smiling and to do the job set out for us. Whatever sacrifices this might involve will be small compared to that made by many others. We pledge to do what we personally can, in the same spirit.”¹⁶ Joyner's report for the month of December 1941 opened with a strong statement of support for the America newly involved in World War II.

He had just come back from an annual leave, spending most of the time with family in central Nebraska. During a vacation stop in Chicago, where he visited the Field Museum and Art Institute, and a visit to the NPS Regional Office in Omaha, he queried people about the Tower. Of those he talked to, only one was unfamiliar with DTNM, and that was a soldier who had been

on maneuvers during the week that Hopkins was stranded on top of the Tower. The publicity generated by the stunt certainly raised the awareness of the national monument throughout the country.

In January of 1942, Dwight Richards left DTNM for assignment to Yellowstone National Park, leaving just two permanent employees at the Tower, Joyner and a general mechanic. The NPS had started a new type of organizational function in 1937, one which Joyner felt would free up Tower personnel to take care of Tower business, and leave the NPS business to the new Coordinating Superintendent's staff in Yellowstone National Park. The change was due to the regionalization plan of the NPS, created for better coordination between the activities of the field offices and Washington offices. The reorganization moved slowly through the NPS, the authority of the regional directors increasing only when such action was deemed justified by the Washington office.

Joyner mentioned in his January report the installation of a new electric generator replacing a unit ". . . which was wasteful of fuel and oil, and of repair parts and time, besides being undependable." The existing lines were renovated allowing for the use of the new three-wire system, and the telephone system was also checked over. "In doing all of this the lines were placed on poles, which while not the most satisfactory method, is more so than the previous installation on trees."¹⁷

Although there was severely cold weather in the month of January (for nine days the maximum temperature was below 32° F; for eight days the minimum temp was below 0° F), DTNM enjoyed an increase of visitation of almost 100 percent from the previous year. From conversations with visitors to the national monument Joyner felt certain that the Hopkins episode would definitely be a factor in increasing travel to the Tower that next summer.

At Mrs. Joyner's suggestion and invitation, the local Homemaker's club sponsored a benefit supper and card party for

the Red Cross at the Joyner home on January 24. The community had already raised more funds than the original quota set for the end of 1941, and also more for a recent "War Fund Drive." The party was a success, with the amount being raised that evening alone exceeding the original quota for the whole area.

Joyner spent most of February revising his office routine to function under the new NPS arrangement, where a minimum of office work would be done at the Tower. Files had to be condensed and reorganized to make a smooth transition.

He made two trips to Sundance—one to attend the monthly Chamber of Commerce meeting, and the other to meet several officials about local National Defense efforts. No plans were underway, except for the collection of waste materials and an emphasis on rubber conservation.

The Tower Tavern about a mile outside the boundary of the national monument had recently changed ownership. Mr. and Mrs. Mason Roberts planned to tear down most of the existing buildings and build a small frame store and residence. They did not plan to develop any tourist facilities, but Joyner wondered about the competition with Grenier's store, which had been in operation for over 15 years. He also expressed dismay that the Roberts' renovation would not include the elimination of old sawmills on land close by their site, and which could be seen when driving into DTNM.

He concluded his report:

I personally was quite thrilled to watch a bobcat stalking a cottontail rabbit on the parking lot area on the 7th. It was the first time I had seen such an animal not in captivity. The rabbit outwitted the cat by utilizing the shelter of the large boulders. All during the month we saw tracks of the cat around headquarters, and the morning of the 24th found where it had the previous night cornered, dug out, and eaten a rabbit. Can it be that the cat will stay closely here because of the large number of cottontails present? I am wondering what the effect will be on their

numbers. Incidentally they (the rabbits) were taking all the preliminary steps during the month to assure the preservation of the species. ...¹⁸

Joyner combined his March and April reports, citing several circumstances for the change: planning for the upcoming travel season; the incapacitation by illness of general mechanic Heppler, the only other permanent employee, which necessitated changes in Joyner's schedule; the extremely high fire danger in early April; the death of John Thorn, a former custodian of DTNM; and Joyner's involvement with the Civilian Defense activities of the community.

George Hopkins, the parachutist, had joined the Army Air Corps, and the story of his sojourn atop the Tower and subsequent enlistment was carried in newspapers around the state, with some nationwide coverage in papers and magazines. The story and accompanying photograph were being circulated by the Wyoming Department of Commerce and Industry, who were hoping to increase visitor numbers to the state in general, and the Tower in particular.

Travel to the Tower in March and April of 1942 may have shown a decrease from the previous year, but Joyner was quick to point out that this was not a true reflection of visitation to the national monument. Those months in 1941 included visits by large groups of soldiers—if these were not averaged in, travel would actually show an increase in 1942. He also notes that the number of states represented each month was fifty percent greater than the previous year.

Because of military enlistments, staff was in short supply throughout the county. Joyner worried about fire protection during the tourist season, especially since he anticipated greater travel to DTNM as a result of the Hopkins episode, and the staff was already short-handed.

With potential employees in the vicinity the least for many years, Joyner was unable to employ an Emergency Fire Guard. Since Heppler was not working, Joyner deferred other chores

and attended to the fire danger. During this spring period the Forest Service staffed their fire lookout on Warren Peak in the Bear Lodge Mountains, one of the earliest openings of the lookout on record.

A fire danger level of "High" was declared about the middle of April, due to lack of precipitation, high winds, heavy grass cover from the previous year, and uncontrolled fires burning just four miles from DTNM. However, precipitation in the latter days of the month alleviated the danger for several weeks.

Heppler had been laid up for a few weeks because of a back problem, but in true Joyner style they worked the situation to their advantage. Once Heppler could be up and about he reported to the office, where he worked on fire control planning, and spent time training in order to substitute as custodian of DTNM, learning the necessary office work and reports. By mid-April Heppler returned to his regular work, and while Joyner noted that the training upset the usual schedule, he felt the increased value of Heppler to the national monument more than compensated for the disruption.

The death of John Thorn, known as "the dollar-per-month" custodian of DTNM, meant the loss of a good friend, both to the national monument and to Joyner. He and Heppler served as pallbearers at Thorn's interment in the Sundance Cemetery on April 23.

Joyner attended a Civilian Defense and Fire Training School at Yellowstone National Park from May 18 to 23, and he felt he would be able to put the benefit of the school to good use in the local community, by his renewed perception of the war and its problems.

In June the Standard Red Cross First Aid Course began classes for DTNM personnel, including the wives. During the course Joyner gave a series of discussions and demonstrations on Civilian Defense. He felt the presentations gave the community a different concept of active involvement; that any savings made—in preventing fire, reducing waste of staff and critical materials,

taking care of equipment and health—was as much a part of the defense program as a study of bombs, gas, and aerial attacks.

Joyner reported on a new publication:

‘The Big Horns Edition’ of *The Sheridan Press* is an annual publication, devoted to the various attractions of this region and to ‘pointing with pride.’ Distribution of this publication is wide-spread. This year it has a cover featuring the Devils Tower. It is interesting to note that the Devils Tower has been annexed by the Big Horn region; that in the past it has been claimed by the Central Black Hills; that we personally do not care where it is but are pleased to know that it is of such importance; that some of the local people will be further perturbed in that they have resented its ‘being moved to the Eastward’ and they will now resent its ‘being moved to the Westward.’¹⁹

He also noted the assistance given by the prairie dogs in controlling the spread of sweet clover on the national monument:

The past years, as well as this spring, have been favorable for the spread of sweet clover which has sprung up wherever sand or gravel from the Belle Fourche River has been used on the road, parking area, and trails. Some time has been devoted to controlling it. Where the entrance road passes through our prairie dog ‘town’ we did no control work; the rodents apparently have learned of the shortage of man-power and have decided to help. They have pretty well cleaned up the weed along that road—an area averaging four feet in width on both sides of the road for over a half mile. We will remember their assistance next time we find them burrowing underneath the road!²⁰

The eleventh annual Old Settlers’ Picnic on June 21 had lower attendance than previous years, partly due to the war,

but primarily due to a storm in the area that morning. Stormy Sundays during May and June greatly reduced the number of area residents who were regular visitors to the Tower.

Most of the non-local visitors to the Tower over the summer of 1942 were persons traveling as a result of the war—either for the armed services or workers in some war industry. If the national monument had not had visitors attracted by the Hopkins' event, Joyner estimated their visitor numbers would have been about 40% of the 1941 figures.

On September 2, Sgt. George Hopkins of the Paratroops, Fort Benning, Georgia, made a visit to DTNM with his wife and friends. The "Man on the Tower" took his first opportunity to walk the trail around the base of the Tower, accompanied by Joyner. Hopkins was serving as an instructor in the Army.

The 1942 Report of the Secretary of the Interior encompassed reports from all Directors, including Newton B. Drury, Director of the NPS. He commented on the declining visitor numbers throughout the National Park System, with the realization that the Service faced the necessity of adapting itself to rapidly changing conditions. "Uses of park areas not contemplated in peacetime are being undertaken, even to the point of sacrifice of park values where clearly necessary and with no alternative, as part of the cost of victory."²¹ The NPS stood squarely behind the war effort.

Drury also said:

As trustee for many of the great things of America—areas of outstanding natural beauty, scientific interest, and historical significance—the National Park Service has realized its obligation to harmonize its activities with those relating to the war, aiding wherever possible, and striving to hold intact those things entrusted to it—the properties themselves, the basic organization trained to perform its tasks, and most important of all, the uniquely American concept under which the national parks are preserved inviolate for the present and future benefit of

all of our people.²²

Parks in Hawaii and Alaska were closed to visitors, and many parks were closed to sightseeing and charter bus services. Actual military occupation of some units, notably Fort Pulaski in Georgia and Cabrillo in California, were among the 125 permits issued by the Department of the Interior to the War and Navy Departments and war agencies to make use of NPS lands, buildings, and facilities.

Emergency organization plans were developed for each park area, and fire schools were conducted throughout the park system for training instructors in building and forest fire suppression, control of incendiary bombs, defense against sabotage and other war hazards, law enforcement, protection of visitors, and conduct of operations under war conditions. Park superintendents like Joyner were given authority to adjust rates and services to meet the rapidly changing war conditions.

In August a picnic was held at the new Lake Cook Recreation Grounds in the Bear Lodge National Forest, where the Forest Service gave a demonstration of equipment and their six-man fire suppression crew. Joyner explained the suppression model he had developed that showed the effects of people becoming overly-excited at a fire. He also verified how a small amount of water could put out a large fire if the water was properly used, thereby conserving water and adhering to a wise-use policy. More training was given during a fire school for the community.

On August 24 a lightning storm resulted in a full-fledged fire two days later on a ranch north of the Tower. Joyner mentioned several things about the fire—first, that the action, efficiency, and organization of the local people who responded to the fire, which was in the Tower protection zone, without a doubt kept it from being a major disaster. The time and effort spent on the fire school and demonstrations paid off in a big way. Joyner underlined this point: Had there not been the interest in the fire school, people to fight this fire would have been lacking, and they could not have been hired for any amount of money. Joyner

felt that several successful areas of the fire fight were directly attributable to Tower staff demonstration efforts and the fire school hosted by DTNM.

Under his "Visitors" heading of the October 1942 report Joyner notes:

Special: There seems to be nowhere else to mention our visitors by plane. Several times every day we are visited by 4-motored army bombers. These visits are in two classes—(1) those traveling overland, and (2) those making the Devils Tower their objective. Apparently the proximity of the Bomber School at Rapid City, South Dakota, accounts for these planes. On a number of occasions 10 or 15 minutes were spent circling the Tower and Little Missouri Buttes. Generally the planes arrive singly, but several flights, with as high as 10 planes, have been observed.²³

In mid-October work began on cleaning up several dumps on private land adjacent to DTNM, and saving any material deemed suitable for salvage. The old CCC dump, located on private ground, had long been rumored to contain much of value, as was a dump started by gravel contractors who had worked on the Tower road several years prior. Just by looking at the dumps it was impossible to determine how much material might be in them that had been covered over. Joyner wanted to work the dumps and settle the questions.

After asking several local organizations for assistance, Joyner secured the help of the Boy Scout troop in Sundance to work the dumps, and C.D. Roberts of Sundance donated a truck and driver. A dozen Scouts, their Scoutmaster, the truck driver, and Joyner spent a long Saturday at the sites, eventually hauling away three tons of salvage iron, rubber, copper, and brass.

Heppler had been on sick leave since September 14. In early December he had back surgery and would be unable to return to work for at least six months, and then only light duty. In early

January Walter Bren took over Heppler's position, working as a per diem handyman while Heppler was on sick leave.

During the latter part of March 1943 the Belle Fourche River reached its flood stage. Joyner recorded the water level as being the highest in the years he had been at the Tower, and nearly as high as the river was in 1927 when it washed the bridge out. The improvements made to the river channel from 1927 to 1933 proved their value, as there did not appear to be much damage from the rising water. Further on downstream an old steel bridge at Belle Fourche, South Dakota, was washed out.

However, when the water subsided it was discovered that the flood, along with the ice breaking up earlier than usual in January, had caused major damage to the water gaps in the fence across the river. Joyner estimated that six or eight man-days would be spent repairing the water gaps and damaged sections of fence. He stated that the problem was heightened by 1200 head of hungry yearling cows that were eyeing the lush grass on the national monument side of the fence.

Joyner's March report included a section about private lands. A block of about 10,000 acres consisting of at least five ranches had been purchased by Earle Ikes, who currently lived and worked in California, but had previously, along with his wife, been a resident of Crook County. The tract was mainly in the river valley to the northeast of the national monument, and bordered DTNM along the central half of the northern boundary line.

Joyner went on to say:

I do not anticipate any problems arising from this change in ownership. In passing it is interesting to note a trend in land ownership which has taken place in the eleven years I have lived here. At first Belle Fourche River valley was generally occupied by small land-owners, although the big outfits had occupied it in the early settlement of this country when there was 'free range.' Today, the valley from a point 13 miles south of Hulett, 8 miles northeast of here, is occupied by 6 large outfits with the exception

of less than a half-dozen small land-owners. This is sure to produce a lasting, and we believe beneficial, effect on the economy of this portion of the county. We believe it will simplify certain angles of administration of this area and our relationships in the local community.²⁴

During the war years Joyner continued to travel throughout the county to meet with the County War Board, the local rationing board, the County Agriculture Transportation Committee, and other agencies associated with the war effort. He encouraged better fire protection in the area, agreeing to help the local Forest Ranger set up a Forest Fire Fighters Service.

The Wyoming Legislature had adjourned without strengthening what Joyner considered to be very inadequate fire laws. The Forest Service had hoped that new legislation advocating stronger laws would be introduced. Since the majority of timbered land near DTNM was privately owned, it was not subject to any form of protection, organized or otherwise. Fires generally attracted a force of volunteer fire-fighters who had fair success despite little organization. However, Joyner believed that most fires could be prevented by acceptable methods of forest utilization, by proper pre-suppression measures, by care with small "necessary" fires and, if a fire did occur, by combating it with a more efficient first attack and complete clean up after.

A map of the DTNM Fire Protection Zone and adjacent areas was completed during the month of March. It showed hazard types, topography, roads, trails, sawmills, slash, abandoned mill sites, and buildings. Aerial photographs, the *Geological Folio*, and Joyner's intimate knowledge of the area contributed to the map, which was included in the DTNM Fire Atlas.

Sawmill operations created fire hazards throughout the county. An estimated twenty-seven million board feet of lumber were cut in Crook County in 1942. Eleven and a half million of this was on Forest Service land. The balance, fifteen and a half million, was cut from private land within a radius of less than ten miles from the Tower. The cut in 1943 was expected to be as

great or greater, and would be closer to the Tower.

An extensive sawmill began operation at the end of March a quarter mile from the southeast corner of the DTNM boundary. C. A. Brown, a successful mill operator, had two and a half million feet of logs contracted and was working on the purchase of other tracts. Several of the tracts were close to the national monument, and Joyner felt the slash, left behind after the trees were cut, complicated the Tower's fire-protection program. He also felt a hazard existed with the slabs, edgings, and sawdust that was not burned, but piled onto grassland near the mill.

Brown, however, was quite fire conscious—there had been no problems with his other mills in the area, and he was quite willing to have his crew help with fire-control when necessary. Joyner thought this was compensation enough—there were eight trained and able-bodied men at the mill whose experience would make them invaluable for the first attack on a fire. For the first time there would be an “outside” crew readily available to aid the national monument in a fire-fighting effort.

Herman Schouten filled in for Joyner during the spring of 1944 while Joyner attended a conference in Yellowstone National Park. Schouten's memos to Joyner were the stuff of everyday life at the Tower:

4/25/44 – Went after the mail [three miles from headquarters to the post office]. Drove the cattle off of the reserve. Found three gates open. Started to change the batteries in the light plant. 8 hrs.

4/28/44 – Went after the mail and read it. Spent the balance of the morning splitting wood. hauled two loads of dirt from parking area to the corral in the dump truck. 8 hrs.

4/29/44 – Went after the mail. John and Dick helped me put in the river crossing. Just finished one side. Got most of the cattle out but still have some horses to get out. 10 hrs.

5/1/44 – Monday. Went after the mail, ... read the mail had 4 visitors from Canada, A Mr. Smith called from some where and wanted permission for a Sunday school picnic the 14th or 15th of May told him OK, done some more odd chores about the place went to Hulett and got tick shots at 2pm, pumped water tried to find some dry wood for the house and it's still raining. 8 hr.

5/6/44 – Went after the mail started the pump John and Dick rode the horses down the rest of us went in the pickup repaired the fence north of the entrance to the river drove about 15 head of calves out Very smoky outside Mrs. Hobson tells me it's a fire up in Montana. run out the horses this P M took old iron to river got a load of sand for play ground put up sign (no left turn). looks pretty much like rain so the kids and I put a load of wood up to the dwelling after supper. 10 hr.²⁵

IN OCTOBER OF 1945 a short two-paragraph letter from Edmund Rogers, Coordinating Superintendent at Yellowstone National Park, was sent to all NPS custodians asking them to submit a comprehensive statement detailing the difficulties the new federally-mandated 40-hour work week created for their parks, and recommendations for corrective measures. Joyner responded with a seven-page, single-spaced typewritten letter in early November.

The post-war 40-hour work week being implemented at jobs around the country, along with the removal of gas rationing, meant an increase in visitation at national parks and national monuments. While the NPS wanted to offer the same shortened work week to its employees, Joyner made it very clear that in some national monuments that would be an impossibility:

40-hour week: I believe it to be a good move. ... If whole classes of people are coming to the parks because of the shortened work week, it seems that those of us operating

the parks should enjoy the same opportunity to change our way of life. In an isolated station such as this there are a number of advantages—chiefly that we will be able to attend to personal affairs and shopping without having to take leave so much. It has in the past been a major cause for dissatisfaction among employees, altho' it was oftentimes not recognized. It will, when finally worked out, increase the morale here, I believe. The shortened work week will require that we have a definite schedule of work and adequate personnel and eliminate the old problem of a lot of stand-by time which restricted the activities of the personnel.²⁶

His next few sentences fully explained the problem at the Tower: "Of course it is assumed that nothing more than mention is needed as to the fact that operation of the Devils Tower is not limited to 40 hours per week. It varies from 70 hours in the winter to 105 in the summer."²⁷ With only two permanent employees—himself and the maintenance man—augmented by seasonal rangers who were almost completely tied down to the job of collecting fees at the checking station, the 40-hour work-week was not feasible at DTNM. (In Joyner's September 1940 monthly report, he mentioned a new fee of \$0.50 per vehicle being instituted at DTNM the previous year, and that the area residents' unhappiness with the higher fee had resulted in a decrease in travel to the Tower. By the 1940 travel season, though, both local and tourist visitor numbers were back on the rise, and the entrance fee at the Tower was increased by 15 percent.)

He then went on to explain routine and non-routine expenditures of time, why a staggered schedule would not work with the open-ended visitor days at DTNM, and the problems inherent in the increased number of tourists who wanted a more interpretive visit than just looking and walking around the Tower. Joyner covered several protective issues that the limited number of personnel at DTNM were responsible for—fire fighting, management, and suppression, both within and outside

the national monument boundary; vandalism; and the safety of the visitors themselves—some of whom managed to climb up the talus slope or the boulder field and needed help to find the way back down.

Joyner could not finish the letter without expressing his dissatisfaction with the current arrangement of the DTNM paying two-thirds of the salary of a clerk in the office of the Coordinating Superintendent. The office, in Yellowstone National Park 400 miles away, took care of paperwork generated within the NPS, but as Joyner noted for Coordinating Superintendent Rogers:

We heartily favor being under a Coordinating Superintendent's direction for the services of various technicians and specialists in certain types of procedure save us much time and many mistakes. All that we object to is the cost thereof to our appropriation. If the offices were closer together so that more of the routine work load could be taken from us, we would gladly pay for that we received.

Joyner closed his in-depth detailed response with a short, succinct paragraph, "I am unable to divorce the subject of the 40-hour week from a general survey of what we are attempting to do. Now that the war is over, I no longer think it feasible for us to attempt to operate as we have tried to do in the past."²⁸

A report submitted by Joyner several months later in 1946 leaves one feeling that not much had improved in the interim:

By the maintenance of the few physical improvements at a standard where they in no way distract the visitor as he is deriving inspirational or scientific values; by providing only such additional facilities as meet this test; and by providing personnel who, although they remain in the background, are ever present to help the visitor increase his enjoyment, or increase his knowledge of natural phenomena, and thereby gain greater inspiration. It has been proven here that the presence of such personnel

greatly increases the length of stay and amount of appreciation. The prospect of larger numbers of visitors with but a ragged skeleton of a force and our consequent inability to attain these two objectives gives me a feeling of sadness because of our lost opportunity.²⁹

In 1947 the Joyner's oldest child, Joan, had just one more year before high school. For Joan to attend high school while they lived at the Tower would mean that she board in Sundance, or spend the school year with relatives in Nebraska. Neither of those choices suited her parents, and on February 20, 1947 the NPS accepted Joyner's resignation.

The Joyner family moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, where Joyner became a partner in a stamp and coin collecting business. After closing that business, he was a night watchman, an archeological crew supervisor, and then a university hall guard while a student at the University of Nebraska. He graduated in June 1953, with a BS in science, and in 1957 returned to NPS employ as a regional museum curator. In 1960, surgery revealed that he had cancer of the small intestine. By 1964 the cancer had spread to his liver, and he died on May 3, 1965. One note to his family read, "Newell played out his role well, left many friends, and made more of himself as a human being than the majority of men ever achieve."³⁰

RAYMOND W. MCINTYRE and his wife, Grace, moved to the Tower in 1947 to begin his appointment as custodian of Devils Tower National Monument. Grace would later begin work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, banding birds.

McIntyre was born in North Dakota and raised on a ranch near Great Falls, Montana. He taught school for seven years, and worked 11 seasons for the Forest Service. It was not until he took a job as a ranger in Mt. McKinley National Park in Alaska that he even saw a national park. (The original Mt. McKinley park was designated a wilderness area and incorporated into Denali National Park and Preserve in 1980.)

His first experience with the park system was in a very primitive, remote area of Alaska. At one point he went seven months without a haircut and saw only six people the entire time. As the ranger with the furthest north station, he used dog teams to patrol. McIntyre's station was 125 miles from Fairbanks and he got mail when planes flew over and could manage to hit the woodpile.

After two years in Alaska, McIntyre returned to Montana, and served as a Park Ranger at Glacier National Park prior to moving to the Tower.

DTNM RECEIVED A few requests each year to climb the Tower, but even fewer climbers actually reached the top. Climbers and equipment had to be vetted and approved prior to coming to the Tower. However, climbers no longer had to apply to the Washington office—each national park or monument was to determine the veracity of the qualifications proffered by the applicants.

Jan and Herb Conn wrote to DTNM for permission to climb the Tower in March 1948. McIntyre sent word to the regional director: "As this will be the first attempt by a woman to climb the Tower, except by means of the ladder, I am referring the matter to you. An early reply would be appreciated as they have requested that their letter be answered as soon as convenient."³¹

Reference letters for the Conns recapped their climbing experience, and once their equipment list was deemed satisfactory, they were free to climb the Tower. On July 2, 1948, they summited the Tower, making Jan Conn the second woman to stand on top, the first by using technical climbing skills.

The Iowa Mountaineers from the State University of Iowa in Iowa City started the climbing permission process in May of 1948, and made their climb on the 22 of August. Sixteen members, one of them a woman, stayed overnight on top of the Tower.

A news director for a radio station in Iowa had earlier broadcasted a story about the students' plan to climb the Tower,

saying one of the students was a girl, and if she made it to the top, she would be the first woman to do so. A listener in Oelwein, Iowa, advised the news director that a woman had already conquered the Tower, and when the news director wrote for confirmation of that fact, McIntyre advised the station that two women had already climbed the Tower. The Iowa student, Bonnie Fisher, was the third “girl” to summit the Tower.

ON JANUARY 1, 1949, the title “custodian,” as applied to the manager of a national monument, was changed throughout the National Park Service system to that of “superintendent.” The duties were the same as always, but the new title conferred a greater degree of respect, and better represented what the manager’s job entailed.

A Soil and Moisture Conservation Master Plan, developed in the spring of 1950 for the national monument, addressed two locations of unstable soil conditions—one area of rill erosion and one of stream bank cutting on the east bank of the Belle Fourche River.

A rill is a very small brook or rivulet that cuts into exposed soil. The rill eroded area, which covered about ten acres, was in the center of the national monument area near the then-existing south boundary. Soil type, southern exposure, and thin topsoil, along with a road location near the base of a steep slope all contributed to the severe accelerated erosion of the area. A vegetative cover of native grasses, protected by a light mulch of native hay, would provide an economical stabilization of the erosion.

A more complex problem was the stream cutting area. The narrative portion of the Master Plan gave a historical look at what the Belle Fourche River was like in the early years, and what had been done in the intervening years to prevent and protect the unstable areas. The study concluded:

The revetment structure erected on the river bank along the south boundary of the national monument is effective

at this time. The revetment is a rock basket structure and was erected by the Civilian Conservation Corps during 1936 and 1937. The structure represents considerable investment and has been most effective in securing bank stabilization and preventing land destruction in a vulnerable area of the national monument. The revetment is a major installation . . . well located at a major bend of the Belle Fourche River and has afforded good protection to national monument lands as well as decreasing velocity of flood waters.³²

Within two years of this report, a dam upstream from the national monument would completely change the ways of the river, and the problems of stream cutting and flooding would become a thing of the past.

Devils Tower at a glance...

1941 ~ 1950

Custodian: ~ Newell F. Joyner 1941 - 1947

Custodian/Superintendent: ~

Raymond W. McIntyre 1947 - 1958

*(In January 1949 the title "custodian"
was changed to "superintendent.")*

Visitors: ~ 279,726

Climbers: ~ 46

Chapter VI

1951 – 1960

1952 ~ Elizabeth II acceded to throne

1954 ~ Roger Bannister runs first less-than-four-minute mile

1956 ~ Elvis Presley sings “Heartbreak Hotel”

1958 ~ NASA formed

1960 ~ To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee published

SEVENTEEN AND A HALF MILES UPSTREAM FROM THE TOWER is Keyhole Dam and Reservoir, completed in 1952. It takes its name from the ranch where the dam site crosses the Belle Fourche River in Crook County, Wyoming. Keyhole is a part of the Pick-Sloan Missouri River Basin Project—Cheyenne Division, a program initially authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1944 which approved the general comprehensive plan for the conservation, control, and use of water resource in the entire Missouri River Basin.

The Belle Fourche River is a tributary of the Cheyenne River, which in turn is a tributary of the Missouri River. The dam and reservoir is a multi-purpose unit, providing supplemental storage for the Belle Fourche Project located in South Dakota, limited irrigation in Wyoming, flood control, enhanced recreation, and fish and wildlife conservation. Keyhole State Park encompasses

6,740 acres of land, with the reservoir adding 9,394 acres of water surface and 62 miles of shoreline.

The NPS does not possess water rights for maintaining minimum flows in the Belle Fourche River. The two-plus miles of river within and adjacent to the national monument boundary, while ostensibly under NPS control, are subject to the acts and decisions of organizations and associations far removed from the Tower landscape—this river regulation has affected riparian habitats and geomorphologic processes in the national monument.

ON JULY 16, 1952, Jan Conn and Jane Showacre became the first all-woman technical climbing team to summit the Tower. Conn climbed often in the Black Hills and had climbed the Tower with her husband, Herb, in 1948. At that time she was the first woman atop the Tower since Linnie Rogers climbed in 1895.

Showacre had spent time in the mountains of western Canada and Conn had watched her practice climb on the cliffs along the Potomac River near Washington, D. C. Both felt ready and able to summit the Tower.

Conn recalls, "I was elected to lead the first pitch because it required a long reach, and being one and three-quarters inch over five feet I was three-quarters of an inch taller than Jane."¹

Showacre, known for her healthy appetite, led another pitch later in the climb. Conn followed with their pack that she claimed held food enough for six people. Conn inched her way upward with much grunting, pushing, and heaving. She thought Showacre looked concerned when she finally reached the top of the crack, and sure enough, Showacre said, "Golly, I hope the oranges didn't get squashed."²

After rappelling down and reaching the base of the Tower where a crowd had gathered, they took pictures and gathered their gear. However, they heard one man remark as he turned to leave, "That climb must not be very hard if *they* can do it."³

Since 1937, when Fritz Wiessner made the first technical climb of the Tower, about eighty people had made it to the top. The number of people enjoying recreational and technical climbing, and people climbing the Tower, were on the increase and it was becoming more popular every year.

IN EARLY 1954, progress continued in gathering material and compiling data for a proposed climbing exhibit at the DTNM Museum. Correspondence between the Tower and the Park Naturalist of the Black Hills served as a conduit for information about what the exhibit should include, and the usual questions asked by visitors that the exhibit should answer. This list of questions included: Who first climbed the Tower? Who was Babe White? Who made the first ascent using rock climbing techniques? Have women ever scaled the Tower? How many people have climbed the Tower? Which side of the Tower is climbed? What various routes have been used? What type of equipment is used? Does anything grow on top of the Tower?

Another Soil and Moisture Conservation project was underway to convert small gullies into grassy waterways, aid stabilization of sheet erosion by planting grasses, and prevent damage from runoff during intense rainstorms. The grasses recommended for planting were buffalo grass, blue gramma, western wheat, and switchgrass, in equal proportions in the seed mixture. The gullies in the eroded site would be plugged by small dams to help stop further erosion until the grasses could take root and grow as ground cover.

Willow cuttings, planted among the tetrahedron structure on the Belle Fourche River, would help stabilize the stream bank. The cuttings would come from willow stands within the DTNM boundary.

On June 14, 1954 a memorandum went out to several NPS department heads from the Assistant Director of the National Park Service: "We have received the following teletype, dated June 11, from Acting Regional Director Lloyd, Region Two: 'Superintendent McIntyre, Devils Tower, advises frame residence

No. 2 partially destroyed by fire starting about midnight in vicinity kitchen. Mrs. [Dollie] Heppler, wife of Operator General Frank Heppler, found dead from undetermined cause, possibly heart failure. Mr. Heppler suffering minor burns and leg injury incurred in fighting fire. Taken to nearest Federal physician and possibly hospital by Mrs. McIntyre, a registered nurse.”⁴

Mid-month Superintendent McIntyre sent a detailed report on the incident to the Regional Director, while Heppler remained at the hospital in Deadwood, S.D. recuperating from his injuries. McIntyre concluded his report:

To Heppler must go the credit for saving the entire utility area from destruction. I can't understand how the man subdued the fire with painful burns and a possible fractured leg. He was in such pain that he could not sit upright in the government coupe so was laid in the back seat of my personal car and taken by my wife and Mrs. Nemec to the hospital in Deadwood. Much credit must also go to these two women. My wife, with her nurse's training was able to administer adrenalin, take part in and supervise artificial respiration to Mrs. Heppler and render first aid to Frank. Betty Nemec, who had never had such an experience before, assisted in the attempt at artificial respiration and later guarded the body alone in the darkness back of the machine shop until the arrival of the ambulance.⁵

BY APRIL 1955 plans were underway for a Tower anniversary celebration. The Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration Committee for DTNM held a dinner meeting attended by ninety people from several communities in eastern Wyoming and western South Dakota. Three NPS officials were scheduled to address the meeting—John S. McLaughlin, Acting Regional Director; H. Raymond Gregg, Regional Chief of Interpretation; and Superintendent McIntyre.

McIntyre described the DTNM construction program for the

coming year and covered general development plans for the area. McLaughlin spoke on the willingness of the NPS to cooperate with the local residents in promoting a suitable observation of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of DTNM. Gregg outlined some of the things the NPS was in a position to help with in promoting the celebration and suggested ways the local communities could get additional publicity and recognition for the Tower during the anniversary year.

Several projects and activities were affirmed as easily promoted by both the NPS and the residents. The value of a postage stamp issue was expressed. Gregg encouraged the local group to concentrate on trying to obtain an issue related to the Antiquities Act rather than the Tower alone, since it was usually easier to get recognition for a matter of broader national awareness, and the June date of issue would stimulate interest in the Tower at the beginning of the travel season.

Raymond “Pappy” Bernd, chairman of the committee and the meeting, confirmed that the committee already had assurance that both an Antiquities stamp in June and a Tower stamp in September were to be issued. Whether Bernd misinterpreted some correspondence or whether he was correct Gregg did not know at the time.

Bernd also informed the gathering that the Wyoming State Highway map for 1956 would have the Tower on the cover. There was also consideration of radio and television programs, using people such as ex-Governor Nels Smith and State Senator Al Harding, whose prominence would hopefully capture attention for the Tower. Gregg’s report on the dinner included a list of a few individuals present at the meeting and why he was noting their attendance:

U.S. Commissioner Rounds and Mr. Durfee, both of whom are prominent in business affairs in Sundance and whose services will be available as appraiser in the acquisition of the proposed addition to the national monument.

Mr. Victor French, a retired rancher of Sundance, who showed considerable interest in seeing that the national monument obtains the additional lands and water required for development.

Ex-Governor Nels Smith, who crystallized the discussion by calling for a show of hands of those favorable to the extension of the national monument and obtained a virtually unanimous approval from those present. It may be mentioned here that Mr. Thurman, the owner of the Thorn property, held up his hand as favoring the Government's acquiring his property.

Mayor C. D. Roberts of Sundance, who is an ex-chairman and present member of the Wyoming State Highway Commission. He showed considerable interest and has been most cooperative with Superintendent McIntyre where the national monument program has called for negotiations with the Wyoming Highway Department.

County Assessor Sid Harvey has prepared a very attractive pen sketch which has been made available for publicity use in connection with the anniversary promotion.

Mr. John Lindsey, publisher of *The Sundance Times*, was present and made photographs of the speakers as well as obtaining information for the next edition of his paper. He has been most cooperative with Superintendent McIntyre and seemed sympathetic to the entire proceedings on Saturday evening although he took no active part in the discussion.

Mr. Smithson, representing the Thomas D. Murphy Co., calendar publishers of Red Oak, Iowa, was present and displayed a 1956 calendar with the striking picture from a color film of Mr. Joe Fastbender of Spearfish, South Dakota. The proprietor of the Black Hills Bentonite Co. in Moorcroft ordered a thousand of these calendars

and probably a number of other business firms in the region will buy and distribute these attractive calendars. Mr. Smithson stated that beneath the calendar insert the company planned to prepare a story about the Tower.

Mr. Bernd is a prime mover in the promotion of the Old Settlers' Picnic which will be held on June 5 this year. The group plans an elaborate entertainment program and expects to attract a rather large crowd with the motive of raising funds to assist the committee in promotion of the anniversary celebration. It is the plan of the committee to establish a contact point outside the entrance of Devils Tower National Monument on June 5, the day of the picnic. This will be clearly identified as a committee operation. At this point those arriving will be given instructions on the location of the picnic event on the north road, and each visitor will be given an opportunity to make a voluntary contribution to the work of the committee. No interference or undue pressure will be exerted upon the outside tourists regularly visiting the national monument. This arrangement appears to be necessary and if it is properly handled should be no embarrassment to the Service.⁶

MISSION 66 WAS a ten-year federal program for national parks development, its culmination to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service. When Conrad Wirth became director of the NPS in December 1951 the parks were experiencing booming travel numbers but deteriorating resources. He initiated work on a Mission 66 proposal in 1955, and the program began in 1956.

Outmoded and inadequate facilities were to be replaced with improvements necessary to meet expected visitor demands, but designed and located to reduce the impact of public use on a park's unique natural features. At DTNM this mandate meant relocating several areas and activities—overnight camping, the

evening campfire program, the administration building, and utility and residence areas—from the Tower base to the banks of the Belle Fourche River on the south side of the Tower. The purchase of 73 acres of land adjacent to the national monument along the entrance road gave the NPS room to move the selected facilities.

A new outdoor amphitheatre, with seating for 200, was built between the new campground and picnic areas. Campground facilities were upgraded, and more sites added, going from 15 units to a 52-unit campground. The crowded picnic area near the Visitor Center parking area was vacated for the new 30-table location, easily reached from the new campground road.

By the end of 1957 the new campground and road were in use, as were the administration building and new residences. The access road had been widened at the entrance station and new parking areas at the prairie dog town were completed.

Many other projects were proposed to use Mission 66 funds—modification of the entrance bridge location and realignment of the entrance road; relocation and reconstruction of the Tower Trail; construction of new trails; new parking areas; increase in fire protection facilities and an enlarged fire control program; construction of a new Administration Building; enlargement of the Tower museum; roadside exhibits; and more personnel—with a total cost of approximately \$622,200 for the ten-year program.

Meanwhile, McIntyre left DTNM, and James F. Hartzell began work as the national monument superintendent on January 6, 1958.

The new campground hosted a Canadian couple traveling with their two children. In late April, during an unseasonable cold spell, they arrived to camp at the Tower. Hartzell wondered if they wanted to travel farther south where they might have better weather in which to enjoy their camping trip. The husband said, “Ranger, we winter in the middle of Saskatchewan. This *is* summer,”⁷ and they stayed four more days.

Devils Tower at a glance...

1951 ~ 1960

Superintendent: ~ Raymond W. McIntyre 1951 – 1958

~ James F. Hartzell 1958 – 1960

Visitors: ~ 1,031,960

Climbers: ~ 939

Chapter VII

1961 – 1970

1963 ~ President John F. Kennedy assassinated

1964 ~ President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act

*1968 ~ Rev. Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy
assassinated*

1969 ~ Apollo astronauts walk on the moon

1970 ~ The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created

THE EARLY 1960S AT DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL MONUMENT was another era of planned development, projects completed and in progress, and, as always, efforts to improve and enhance the visitor experience. Superintendent Hartzell wrote a revised Park Development Schedule for the Tower in February of 1960, covering the uncompleted portions of the Mission 66 plan and making suggestions that might be considered before final plans for the Visitor Center expansion were complete.

He felt that the extension of the DTNM boundaries, to include the Little Missouri Buttes, would result in a major revision of the entire program for the Tower. While the extension proposal was not dead, he did not think the Tower should predicate all present plans on the possibility.



*Aerial view of the Tower and the Little Missouri Buttes to the northwest
(Tom A. Warner)*

A discussion started in July about the tight roadway corner at the west end of the bridge, and two solutions were proposed: either to enlarge the existing cut at that end to give a straighter approach into the truss portion of the bridge, or relocate the present span to new piers to give a better alignment for a straighter approach. The next month Hartzell withdrew his previous proposal for realignment and set to work preparing a new submittal to relocate the bridge.

In September, three construction projects were approved by the NPS Supervisory Construction Management Engineer: improvement of the existing parking area at the visitor center; improvement of the west approach and railings of the Belle Fourche River bridge; and creation of parking overlooks on approach roads. Although approved by the area engineer, these proposals still needed to be “programmed” into the national system before construction could begin.

A letter sent by President John F. Kennedy to the heads of

Executive Departments and Agencies helped move the planned projects along: “In carrying out approved Government programs during the present period of economic slack, we should seek every means consistent with efficiency to accelerate temporarily planned government procurement, construction and related activities. A particularly high priority should be given to actions which could be taken in time to have an effect on unemployment by this spring and to projects located in areas of labor surplus.”¹

His missive went on, encouraging departments to review procurement plans immediately and to place all planned orders as quickly as possible. He expected them to speed construction of public works projects already started, and to accelerate natural resource conservation and development, light construction, maintenance, repair, and other work that could be done or started quickly.

The departments were to also prepare an inventory of projects that could be prioritized or initiated quickly, but which might require additional funds. He expected an answer to this February 2 letter to be submitted no later than February 25.

Press reports of the President’s economic message indicated that government spending would be increased where funds were available. Director of the NPS, Conrad Wirth, made clear his intentions of complying with the President’s request, in a letter to his Regional Directors, Chiefs, and Superintendents:

By the time you receive this you will have been notified that I want the Parks and Regional Offices to assist the Field Design Offices to the maximum extent possible by the detail, where practicable, of professional or other personnel. I do not expect the operational program in the parks to be seriously hampered, however, I would like it understood, the speed up in the construction program is to have first priority...

I know you have all been making strenuous efforts to see that our programs are carried out expeditiously,

but I would like to ask you to exert even more effort in order that the Service may do its share in improving the economy of communities in which our areas are located. I know I can count on you for your fullest cooperation as in the past.²

By August of 1961, some Tower projects were finished, some partly completed, and some had not yet begun. Hartzell mentioned two of these to his Regional Director:

During the 1961 fiscal year we surfaced approximately one third of the Tower Trail. This work has been very well received and we think we should continue this project until it is complete.

Due to the relatively short stay of most visitors and the removal of the picnic area and the campground, the old Visitor Center parking area continues to meet most of the demands for Visitor Center parking but we think that even a slight increase in visitors would result in crowded parking conditions. The view points planned . . . would give visitors a more complete and wider view of the Tower and better photographic sites.³

More visitors wanted to climb the Tower and Hartzell felt regulations for climbing should be developed, both for the safety of the climbers, and to protect the Tower from physical damage. Rangers checked the equipment of those interested in scaling the Tower, but little else was required. In an interview Hartzell said, "[We] didn't forbid climbers, except for the guy with the clothesline—we did discourage him."⁴

Hartzell described an outdoor wedding held at DTNM in the early 1960s. People gathered on a grassy meadow southwest of the Tower, with a view that stretched fifty miles up the Belle Fourche River valley. Large aluminum cans filled with water and lilacs created an aisle across the meadow. The ceremony was complete with music from a portable organ.

In 1962 Hartzell decided to prepare for reprinting *Devils Tower*

National Monument– A History, and as a result, arranged with Seasonal Ranger Naturalist John Thorson to make an organized search of the old Charles Graham cabin. A Land Office letter indicated that, in 1892, there was an unfinished house, a stable, and a corral on the land. They would look for any relevant material which might indicate the age of the cabin and the period of occupancy.

The cabin was built in a small gully between the Tower and a spring. A tall sandstone rock stood at the entrance to the small gully, and names and dates from 1893 to 1929 were carved on the rock. Many old stumps showed evidence of cutting, and small pines and oaks were found in the cabin area.

Glass bottles, tin cans, shoes, hardware items, and expended cartridge shells were the principal items recovered from the site. The cabin lies within 100 yards of the old approach road to the Tower used until a new road was built in the mid-1930s.

May of 1962 saw several parks hurrying to plan and construct temporary campground facilities to handle the expected crowds traveling to and from the World's Fair in Seattle, Washington. By one count, ten million people attended the fair from April 21 to October 21, 1962, so the effort to provide for more accommodations in the national parks was certainly justified.

Hartzell outlined five key points to the DTNM plan for temporary facilities. He estimated the money needed for additional expenses—more tables and garbage cans—and attached a sketch map showing where the concentration of campers would be, relative to the Tower. The national monument was as prepared for World Fair travelers as he could make it.

ROBERT J. MURPHY took the reins of DTNM when he became superintendent on April 21, 1963.

In January, 1966, A. Clark Stratton, Acting Director of the NPS, sent a letter with suggestions on how each national park and national monument could help commemorate the Golden Anniversary of the National Park Service.

Fifty years of dedication to the preservation of the nation's natural and historic heritage would culminate in a special ceremony, on August 25 of 1966. While the smaller units in the NPS were not able, or expected, to carry out elaborate programs, all sites were challenged to be a part of the national endeavor, and every NPS employee to be a public relations officer. It was all a matter of employing the strengths that defined each individual unit within the NPS jurisdiction.

The NPS was to be promoted for a year, using as many of the nine points in Stratton's letter as feasibly possible. The national office prepared a packaged slide talk, a Fiftieth Anniversary Symbol, and an Anniversary kit to assist each superintendent in planning their program.

By February 3, Superintendent Murphy had a list of anniversary activities compiled and sent, ahead of the February 15 deadline. Murphy received a prompt thank you from Stratton for the very full report of planned activities for the Anniversary year.

A SAFETY APPRAISAL of DTNM was completed in June of 1965. The more common hazards to visitors were listed as follows: falls on trails; traffic control; dead cottonwood limbs falling in the campground; prairie dog bites; mountain climbing; and rattlesnakes.

Two-thirds of the Tower Trail had been paved, and the remaining portion would be done in 1967. The unpaved portion was relatively safe except when muddy. Simple warnings about wet and muddy trails were the only safeguards deemed necessary.

Regional Chief of Maintenance Cooper recommended striping all roads, and Special Assistant Frank Childs recommended striping the parking lots, too, which would significantly improve the flow of traffic. They also suggested that lowering the speed limit to 25 miles per hour through most of the park would provide safer and better traffic control

to bridge approaches, parking near the prairie dog town, the campground/picnic area junction, Administration Building parking, utility area road, and the private cabin area road. A 15-mile-per-hour speed limit was suggested for the campground, and signs warning “Narrow Bridge” needed to be placed at both ends of the bridge approaches.

Another concern was the weight limit on the bridge, highlighted when a truck loaded with well drilling equipment, with a gross weight 53 tons, became “lost” and drove up to the Visitor Center, as did another truck loaded with a portable car wash unit, gross weight of 40 tons. The NPS engineering staff was asked to look at the situation and give advice to Murphy.

All hazardous limbs needed to be removed from the trees in the picnic area and the campground, which would require the skills of a tree preservation crew. Once the initial work was done, follow-up maintenance could be accomplished with much less time involved.

Prairie dog bites were believed to happen far more often than reported. A new brochure contained a warning statement, and Childs remarked, “It is hoped the public will read and heed!”

Climbing the Tower continued to gain in popularity. New climbing regulations were drafted to help maintain the safe climbing record. While registration at the Tower was still required, the rangers planned to place more emphasis on the screening of climbers and inspection of their climbing equipment.

Although only one rattlesnake bite had been recorded in recent years, twelve to twenty-four rattlers were killed annually around the prairie dog town, the Tower Trail, and on the roads. Childs suggested a simple “Accident Action Plan” be prepared and posted for employee guidance in the event of a rattlesnake bite.

A fire action plan was set in place, first aid kits upgraded, and nearly all the power equipment and electric outlet plugs had been grounded. Childs gave high marks to the safety consciousness of the DTNM staff, and noted their active membership in the Federal

Safety Council of the Black Hills. Safety was well emphasized at all levels and in all activities on national monument grounds.

On October 16, 1965, Superintendent Murphy received an appraisal packet from a realtor. The Thurman property—eighty acres, a café, and motel cabins owned by Clifford P. and Alice Thurman—was being offered to the NPS for purchase. This was not the size of the Missouri Buttes boundary extension but, nevertheless, the location of the property in the river valley and its shared border with the existing DTNM boundary would make it a wonderful addition to the national monument holdings.

The NPS encouraged partner organizations—National Park Cooperating Associations—which could assist and help raise funds for parks and monuments, funds that could be used to enhance the visitors' experience. The Devils Tower Natural History Association (DTNHA) incorporated on February 10, 1966, with several objectives.

They planned to sponsor, prepare, publish, and sell books, pamphlets, folders, and maps in the Visitor Center bookstore. Another goal was to acquire material or equipment that could be used in the museum or interpretive work of DTNM. The organization planned to assist the Tower personnel in the collection and preservation of items important to the Tower.

Richard T. Hart supervised DTNM from May 8, 1966 to September 30, 1968, with Alvin T. Aaberg serving as acting superintendent from December of 1968 until Homer Robinson arrived to take on management duties.

Robinson became superintendent of DTNM on June 14, 1970, transferring from Everglades National Park in Florida. Called Pete by almost everyone, he would manage the Tower for over 16 years. He, his wife Gisele, and two sons moved to Wyoming after several assignments at various national parks and monuments across the country.

Devils Tower at a glance...

1961 ~ 1970

Superintendent: ~James F. Hartzell 1961 – 1963

~ Robert J. Murphy 1963 – 1966

~ Richard T. Hart 1966 – 1968

~ Alvin T. Aaberg 1968 – 1970

(Acting Superintendent)

~ Homer “Pete” Robinson 1970

Visitors: ~ 1,139,000

Climbers: ~ 1,203

Chapter VIII

1971 - 1980

- 1973 ~ Roe v. Wade Supreme Court ruling on abortion*
1974 ~ Richard Nixon resigns Presidency over Watergate
*1976 ~ Concorde supersonic jet service begins between
U.S. and Europe*
*1978 ~ American Indian Religious Freedom Act
becomes law*
1979 ~ Iran hostage crisis begins
-

DURING OCTOBER 1971, ONE OF THE WORST SNOWSTORMS in years hit northeast Wyoming, paralyzing all travel for several days. Devils Tower National Monument experienced a power outage that lasted five days, with telephone service out for nine. Hundreds of power and telephone poles throughout the county were broken and blown down.

In June of 1972, national monument staff began the Old Ladder Restoration for a historic preservation project. The plan was to restore part of the wooden ladder that Ripley and Rogers built and used for the first recorded summit climb of the Tower in 1893.

Terry Rypkema and Bruce Bright climbed the Tower to do a reconnaissance of the condition of the remaining parts of the old

ladder. It was deemed feasible to reset some old pegs, replacing and relocating a few, then attaching a new 1" x 4" railing to the outside of the pegs to restore the top 140 feet of the old ladder.

On July 3 Superintendent Robinson brought lumber, nails, hand drill, sledge hammer, wire, and pliers to the Visitor Center for the "Ladder Crew"—Bob Hirschy, Roger Holtorf, Bright and Rypkema. They loaded these materials, along with two ropes and climbing hardware into a litter and pulled it all to the base of the talus slope. The men then moved equipment by hand up to the base of the ladder crack in the side of the Tower.

On July 9 work on the ladder began in earnest. They spent the day on the Tower, with Rypkema tightening, replacing, and relocating the stakes, while Bright belayed (worked safety for Rypkema), and Holtorf sent tools and materials up on the pulley.

The next day Bright again worked belay while Holtorf attached the 1x4s to the pegs of the ladder, and Rypkema worked the pulley system, sending repair materials up the Tower side. Before leaving for the day they all went to the top of the Tower to record the climb they had made while scoping out the ladder project, then rappelled down the 600-foot pulley rope.

Bright and Rypkema finished the project the next morning. Rypkema concluded his report:

When we inspected the old ladder before the project I felt that it was in such poor condition that it would have essentially disappeared in another couple of years. After completing our work I felt that the portion we restored is probably sturdy enough to be climbed on, and if undisturbed, should last many years. . . .

Judging from the old photographs of the old ladder, and the remaining portions we found during the project, I think we restored it as closely as possible to its original design. When the new 1x4s weather in color to match the old wood, it should be almost an exact replica of

what was placed there in 1893.¹

DURING 1972 THE Crook County Bicentennial Committee developed a proposal for a Museum of Natural and Western History to be built on state land adjacent to the national monument. The proposal contained a narrative explanation of the three major portions of the museum—natural history, American Indian culture, and the white settlement—as well as sketches and other supporting material.

The committee hoped to give recognition to the Tower as the first national monument, to create a visual lesson, documenting the various developments in the history of the West and Wyoming, in particular Crook County and the Tower area. Each of the three major segments would be dramatized by a life-sized diorama, all housed in a large rectangular building built of phonolite porphyry, the rock of the Tower. The building would be situated on the property such that the Tower would rise on one side, and the Bear Lodge Mountains would be the opposite view.

One sketch in the proposal shows several different wagon roads that crossed the area—the Cheyenne wagon road, the old Montana road, the Miles City-Deadwood trail, the Texas trail—and where the Wilson Price Hunt party crossed Wyoming in 1811, and the Custer expedition route across the county in 1874.

Another drawing depicted where the museum building would sit in relation to the Tower, while a third portrayed a shaded viewing terrace, with an office and storage building.

The narrative briefly covered the natural history of the Tower area, the American Indian presence—including two legends regarding the Tower and noting the finding of what is now known as The Vore Buffalo Jump east of Sundance—and the early settlement of Crook County.

The proposal closed with a newspaper story about the buffalo jump, a picture of Sundance Mountain, and a letter of support

from Superintendent Robinson, in which he said the proposal had merit, and could very well enhance the interpretive story already being shared at the Tower.

Robinson's annual reports were generally a two-page synopsis of the previous year's activities at the Tower. He broke them down into sections—Administration, Interpretation and Resources Management, Maintenance, and the catch-all "Other" category—and succinctly recapped the national monument's programs, operations, and personnel changes.

In 1972 full interpretive programs began on June 5 and included four nature walks weekly, the popular climbing demonstrations, nightly campfire programs, and short interpretive talks held in front of the Visitor Center. By Labor Day all programs were discontinued for the year.

A new naturalist position was split between DTNM and Grand Teton National Park. With a naturalist on staff, DTNM planned an environmental program to begin in May of 1973.

Over the Labor Day weekend the motorcycle gang "El Banditos" held their national meeting near the Tower. Six rangers were brought in from other areas, but there were no major incidents.

Robinson noted that the power line to the entrance station was put underground, and a six-pair direct burial telephone cable given to DTNM by Big Bend National Park for the new radio system was installed. New radios were planned for installation early the next year.

The radio system—a base radio with seven remote stations, three portables and four mobiles—became fully operational in March. Robinson reported that they could communicate with Mount Rushmore and the Badlands, but not with Wind Cave or Jewel Cave. The new system also included a receiver on the frequency used by the Sheriff and Highway Patrol, with a receiver on the national monument frequency ordered for the Sheriff's Office to complete two-way communication with them.

The Devils Tower Natural History Association continued

to be an active partner with the national monument, and used their funds to purchase items that directly improved visitor satisfaction. In 1972, those purchases included a 16mm movie projector for use in the interpretive programs. New trail interpretive markers were made for the Tower Trail, Joyner Ridge Trail, and the Southside Trail. An oil painting depicting one of the Cheyenne Indian's stories of the Tower formation was restored, and new interpretive exhibits on prairie dogs were purchased. A medallion of the Tower was created to be sold in the Visitor Center bookstore.

Maintenance duties were an on-going process. As soon as the Visitor Center was repainted, new grills were ready for installation in the campground. The Tower Trail, office sidewalks, and one-half mile of a secondary road were all seal-coated, and the maintenance building insulated. An underground fuel oil tank was installed and the oil heating in the six-unit seasonal apartment building was replaced with electric heaters.

As usual, other improvements would be made "when funds permitted."

AS EARLY AS 1920, the NPS had issued sign standards for its national parks and national monuments. The standards were periodically updated and eventually replaced, first in 1940, and again in 1972. The principles that formed the basis for NPS park ranger uniform standards—the value of unity and the power of consistency—would also guide the development of park signs. In 1920, Director Stephen Mather issued Uniform Regulations, part of which required that all NPS rangers, no matter where they were located, wear uniforms of the same design. The uniforms became indelibly associated with the NPS and, as with the uniforms, signs that were distinctive and consistent in their appearance would be recognized as an official voice of the agency.

Visitors to the parks would see signs with wording and design consistent from park to park and be reminded that individual

parks were part of a larger organization with common practices and shared purposes. With common standards, signs could be more authoritative, functional and representative of that larger organization.

Robinson noted progress installing new signs at the DTNM in 1972. "The first series of new signs were installed in early May. The signs are well-made and appear to be a durable product."²

In 1974 sign conversion continued, but things were not going well. "A \$1,300.00 order was sent to FPI [Federal Prison Industries] on July 1, and only a portion of the order has been received after more than six months. It is obvious that we will be unable to meet the conversion deadline without additional funding."³ Robinson's displeasure was obvious, too.

FPI is a government corporation created by federal statute in 1934. It was given several mandates, one of which was to serve as a "mandatory source" in selling its products to federal agencies. This required public agencies to at least try to buy from FPI before they could buy from the private sector.

When Robinson reported on the sign program in 1975—"Conversion continues but at a greatly reduced rate. FPI service continues to deteriorate; orders now take longer than six months"⁴—his comments still maintained some measure of hope. However, by 1976, his patience had run out. "FPI service has become intolerable. Our last order took six months and all wood signs received were unacceptable. It is essential that another source of signs be found."⁵

Robinson did not address the sign issue again in the yearly reports available, and his frustration with the project did not permanently affect his sense of humor with other responsibilities. DTNM hosted a camp for the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC). Robinson said, "A 24-person coed residential camp was operated for 8 weeks in the summer. The enrollees liked the program very much and some excellent work was accomplished. The administrative part of the program was slightly better than chaotic."⁶

IN 1974 ONE climber was rescued from the top of the talus slope. He fell while down-climbing and broke a thigh bone. Robinson had a 40-minute interview on KASL radio in Newcastle in July. One hundred and nineteen motorcycles visited the Tower in August during the annual Sturgis rally. The radio receiver installed in the Sheriff's office in Sundance was not working well—effective two-way communication remained elusive.

In 1975 the History Association purchased a large color aerial photograph of the national monument for display in the Administration Building lobby, and they contracted with Miller Dimensionals in Denver for a 4'x 6' relief map of the Tower.

Concrete slabs for picnic tables were poured and new grills installed in Loop B of the campground, completing that improvement project.

The bridge over the Belle Fourche River was sandblasted, primed, and painted, and rotted timbers, guard posts, and railings were replaced with treated lumber.

Under his "Other" heading Robinson included the following: "The Sturgis motorcycle club came on their annual visit in August with ninety-six motorcycles. Actor Cliff Robertson was here for three days filming a documentary on Indian legends. Sonic booms are on the increase, with 24 recorded in 1975."⁷

In February of 1976 Superintendent Robinson received the Excellence Award for Energy Conservation from the Federal Energy Administration—their highest award.

For America's bicentennial on July 4, the 1893 flag-raising on top of the Tower was reenacted, with climbers setting a United States flag atop the Tower. Climbing demonstrations by national monument staff were provided each morning of the summer season, and Tower staff facilitated one rescue of an injured climber from the top of the leaning column.

THE MID-1970s were fairly quiet years at DTNM, but the Tower was about to come out of the quiet and into the spotlight.

From the national monument's beginning in 1906, events and changes at one time or another increased visitation to the Tower. One such event catapulting visitor numbers to a new level was the release of the film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* in late 1977.

Columbia Pictures spent almost two weeks at DTNM in May of 1976 shooting scenes for a movie described by film critic Rex Reed as "... a wasteful depressing failure ..."⁸ and by Jack Kroll in *Newsweek* as, "...the friendliest, warmest science-fiction epic you've ever seen. It brings the heavens down to earth."⁹

Steven Spielberg, writer and director, felt the movie should encompass one of his favorite themes—the ultimate glorification of the common man. "A typical guy—nothing ever happens to him. Then, all of a sudden, he encounters something extraordinary and has to change his entire life in order to measure up to the task of either defeating it or understanding it."¹⁰

Spielberg instructed Joe Alves, the production designer, "... to search America for a place that only my imagination told me existed."¹¹ This place would be the mountainous area where extraterrestrials make their first contact with earthlings. Alves covered 2,700 miles throughout the west before recommending the DTNM location. The Tower structure then became a motif in the film until appearing as itself as the story moves to the climactic meeting between the humans and the aliens.

Columbia Pictures sent a "Scope of Filming Activity" to Robinson. It delineated where they would be filming within the national monument boundary, what action they would be filming, and their intended time frame for the construction and shooting schedule. They would start construction March 15, 1976 at the entrance gate area, and photograph both day and night scenes in DTNM from May 3 to May 15, depending on weather conditions and changes in their shooting time.

They expected to bring 100 crew people and twenty actors, along with supply vehicles and equipment trucks, all of which would be on national monument grounds at some point during

the shoot.

Columbia had asked to make a few changes to the DTNM entrance: build a false façade in front of the existing gate entrance log building; remove and replace existing DTNM signs, or cover up the existing signs with their own signs for the film; add a traffic arm at the entrance gate. They also asked permission to park Army vehicles on both sides of the road between the entrance gate and the bridge.

The production company itemized what activity would take place right at the Tower:

Devils Tower rock area at base of national monument:

We will have actors climbing on big rocks below actual Devils Tower fluted sides. We may start to climb up the side of Devils Tower only a short distance, never to the top of it at any time.

We will have cable-electric lights to rig at base of Devils Tower.

We would like permission to fly helicopters around Devils Tower, which will be shining lights at night down on actors climbing over big rocks at base of tower.

The helicopters will not land near the tower at any time. They will land and take off from private property nearby the entrance to the park area, but never in any of the park area.¹²

Lynn Thompson, Regional Director of the Rocky Mountain Region of the NPS, based in Denver, signed off on a review of Columbia's filming permit. The review letter to Robinson echoed his initial concern about the effects of the filming activities on the features of the national monument, the wildlife, and on visitor access and use. The review also addressed the special requests that Columbia had made:

We object to building a false façade in front of the

existing gate entrance log building; to removing NPS signs; and to adding a traffic arm at the entrance gate. We see no benefits from such changes and this would, in our opinion, unreasonably curtail and impair visitor use of the area. Also, a filming company should not be allowed to do things in a park which are denied the general public.

The use of helicopters should be closely regulated. Before allowing overflights, particularly at night, we would like to have the Office of Air Services, Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C., review this....

This does not prohibit issuing a filming permit immediately. We need this information before allowing helicopter flights over the Park. The safety of human life is a major responsibility, and we must be assured that proper precautions are being taken at all times.¹³

The NPS was concerned about disturbance to visitors and wildlife in granting permission for production vehicles and helicopters to operate within national monument grounds. They wanted to make sure that the use of film company vehicles anywhere within the Park did not interfere with visitor access and use, or with normal NPS activities. This included Columbia's proposals to have actors entering DTNM in Army vehicles, and parking vehicles alongside the road between the entrance station and the bridge.

The review letter concluded with discussion of a bond or cash deposit to be made by the production company and the concurrence with Robinson's approval to allow Columbia to proceed with their plans, with the stipulation that all conditions of the permit be met.

In April, Robinson sent a letter with the requested information on the helicopters to the Regional Director. Four helicopters would be used in the production, all the pilots had commercial licenses, and all had extensive mountain flying experience. The

helicopters would be based on private land adjacent to the east boundary of DTNM.

Robinson summed up the action plans for the helicopters with this paragraph:

The flights over the national monument will be approximately NW to SE on the west side of the Tower. The anticipated minimum altitude over the talus slope will be no less than 200' and hopefully it will be nearer 500'! The horizontal distance from the side of the Tower will be about 500'. If all goes according to plan all of the filming and flying will be from about 4:00 p.m. until dusk for three days.¹⁴

Robinson recalls the filming of *Close Encounters* in a 1981 interview with D. L. Berglund:

The [film] crew was here for 12 days in May, 1976. The studio brought 110 people from Burbank and they hired locally on a daily basis up to 300 'extras.' Their filming base camp was at the now KOA. At that time only the 'A' frame was standing. The film company rented ten acres from Campstool [Ranch] around the 'A' frame, installed a chain link fence, and constructed the 'Decontamination Station' seen in the movie.

Filming was done at the camp, on Campstool Hill (two locations), at several places on and near Paul Conzelman's (maintenance worker) ranch, and at the foot of Pine Ridge on U.S. [Highway] 14 (about 14 miles east of Moorcroft).

The company (Columbia) did film from about nine sites inside the National monument, but only used about five in the movie. They filmed at the west end of the old bridge and at two places on a bench about 100 feet above the old bridge, in the trees just north of Prairie Dog Town, and at several sites in the talus slope and just

west of the talus slope.

Nearly all locals who wanted to be in the movie were. None had speaking parts.

They [Columbia Pictures] did not need permission. Filming is considered as a 1st Amendment right.

Columbia asked for permission to cover the entrance signs, disguise the entrance kiosk and land helicopters on top of the Tower. All were denied and the only attempt to circumvent the denial was when they put a strip sign 'Park Closed' on the entrance sign. I caught them and stayed until they took it off.

One park employee had to be with the crew when they were in the National monument. I did all of this and it amounted to about 50 hours during the 12 days. The road was blocked several times for up to 25 minutes from the East Prairie Dog parking strip to the sawdust pile. The company hired off-duty deputy sheriffs and on a few occasions the Highway Patrol helped them. Visitors were inconvenienced for some hours over the 12 days. I give Columbia high marks for being easy to get along with and for being a considerate, helpful outfit. ...

Others in the film from this area: Gisele, Mike, and Scott Robinson [his family]. (Also the dog and pickup.) Some of the local game wardens were also involved. (Jim Johnston, now of Laramie, was one.)

Nothing was filmed at Moorcroft. Columbia wanted to film the train evacuation scene there, but Burlington was not interested, so it was filmed in Alabama.

Most of the filming was done in a WWII blimp hanger at the airport in Mobile, Alabama. The world's largest sound stage at that time was constructed inside the hanger.

The climb of Devils Tower as depicted in the movie

was done in Mobile on the set. Rock climbing of Devils Tower does require technical skills.¹⁵

Local extras hired for the movie were used in scenes shot along Wyoming State Highway 24, to the south outside DTNM, and along U.S. Highway 14 toward Moorcroft. The main shooting location for local talent was at the foot of Pine Ridge on U.S. Highway 14, north of Keyhole State Park.

H. L. Edwards, a veterinarian from Gillette, was on the set during the filming of the "dead" animal scenes. In the movie, the military uses a ruse to evacuate the area, claiming there is poisonous gas in the air, leaving "dead" animals the actors find as they make their way to the Tower. The cattle were trucked over from Gillette, anesthetized on location to appear dead, and all were returned, alive and well, in the evening.

The scene of the actors climbing over the talus slopes of the Tower while evading the helicopters spraying a sleeping agent was shot at what the film crew call "magic time," the thirty minutes or so just before and after sunset. They accomplished the shot in one twenty minute take before the light faded away on one of the last days of filming at the Tower.

After filming at the Tower, the film company moved to Alabama for two months, followed by the editing process, which took over a year. (First scheduled for release in April of 1977, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* would finally open in November.) No outside photographers were allowed on any of the sets, as Spielberg wanted to keep the Tower presence, and the alien story line, as secret as possible until the film opened to the public.

Al Ebner, public relations director for the film, asked that no pictures be taken with the Tower in the background, saying, "Because such a picture might get out and there are actually very few people world-wide who have ever seen it [the Tower]. Just imagine," he pointed, "when they suddenly see that. It'll blow their minds."¹⁶

His words were prophetic. Robinson later stated, "National monument visitation was 156,293 in 1977. Visitation jumped to

272,617 in 1978 after the release of the movie (+74%). Visitation continues to rise yearly.”¹⁷ Devils Tower National Monument became a vacation destination of thousands of movie-goers.

AS WITH ALL administrators of DTNM, Robinson dealt with his share of employee issues, position vacancies, and a near constant influx and transfer of personnel. The split position for naturalist lasted only two years before the position was moved to Grand Teton National Park. The Administrative Clerk transferred to another national monument in June of 1978; the position remained open in January of 1979. The inconvenience of such movement within the NPS was evident in Robinson’s punctuated remark, “His position is still vacant!!”¹⁸

An Administrative Clerk was hired in August of 1979, but transferred after only four months. Robinson notes another job opening with the retirement of the maintenance man in October, and makes an unemotional observation, “The Janitor position has now been vacant for three years.”¹⁹

In April of 1979 another film crew descended on DTNM, this time to record a free climb of the Tower. ABC planned to film George Willig and Steve Matous climbing the Tower for a live broadcast on their television show “The Wide World of Sports.”

This Tower climb would be one of a series of live broadcasts featuring Willig. He rose to instant fame in 1977 when he climbed up the 110-story South Tower of the World Trade Center. Arrested when he reached the top, he was eventually charged with criminal trespass and served with a \$750,000 civil suit. The local news media rallied to Willig’s support, taking up the cause of an underdog against humorless bureaucrats. Willig in the end took a tongue-in-cheek plea: He agreed to pay the city a penny for every floor he had climbed, a total fine of one dollar and ten cents.

Matous began climbing with his brother in the early 1960s in Central Park in New York City, under the watchful eye of their

grandfather. Matous was Program Director at the Colorado Outward Bound School, worked as a ranger in Rocky Mountain National Park, and founded and ran two climbing guide services. He would take part with Willig in live televised shows of rock climbing in the United States, filming ascents of Angel's Landing in Zion National Park in Utah, Castleton Tower in Utah, and the Tower.

ABC first approached Superintendent Robinson in 1978 about the Willig climb, and wanted to use a helicopter to put people and cameras on top of the Tower. Robinson turned that idea down, but ABC talked to a higher authority in Washington, D.C., and Robinson was told to let them land on top. For reasons unknown, ABC decided instead to film Willig and Matous climbing Angel's Landing. Willig's previous climb to the top of Eldorado Canyon in Eldorado Springs, Colorado, in October of 1977, marked the first time that live coverage of a climb was presented on American television.

When the television company returned their attention to a Tower climb in 1979, they again asked permission to land a helicopter on the top of the Tower. Again, Robinson told them no, and again they talked to someone in Washington, but this time Washington did not intervene, and ABC used climbers to run up 30,000 feet of cable. Robinson had this to say about their hired help, "The climbers brought in (about 10) were led by Bev Johnson and Mike Hoover. It is accurate to say that all the ABC climbers were better than Willig (even Steve Matous)." ²⁰

Robinson did not have much good to say about the ABC filming crew, either. "ABC was not particularly easy to get along with. They have little, if any, feeling for the environment." ²¹

In a 1981 interview Robinson recalled the details about the climb and the filming.

About 60 people came from ABC; they had about a dozen vehicles, including two GMC mobile homes and two trucks (one for the blimp). In addition, there was a semi-truck that provided the satellite up-link. (1st time a

live sports program was sent by satellite.) ABC came on a Monday [April 23] and left about 9PM on Saturday, April 28, 1979.

ABC, like Columbia, was required by me to post a \$100,000 bond. In addition, each company had to have accident insurance.

ABC used 9 camera locations—1 in a helicopter, and 1 on the west side of the main road about 1/4 mile below the west road. The rest were close to the Tower or on the Tower.

There were 1500 to 2000 people here for the actual climb on Sat. They started coming at 6 AM and by 10 AM the parking lot was filled. People finally started leaving by 3:30 PM and by 5 PM there were some sites again available in the VC [Visitor Center] parking area. We brought in 5 extra rangers for the big day and should have had 10 or 15. It was a mess with much off road driving and we had no one to write citations.

Again, it was a public rip-off to provide a money-maker for a single company for free.²²

Robinson had not been impressed with the production. In his 1979 annual report he said, "It was far more disruptive than was the 'Close Encounters' film crew."²³

An Associated Press story printed in the Salt Lake Tribune that Sunday summed up the Willig climb with this paragraph, "The two climbers braved chilly winds and a sleet storm to scale the 1,280-foot natural volcanic obelisk while agile ABC Television crews climbed alongside beaming close-ups by satellite to millions of armchair mountaineers."²⁴

BY 1979, THE bridge built in 1928 to span the Belle Fourche River needed more repair and reconstruction than could be justified. In September, a contract was awarded for the construction of a new bridge near the entrance, to replace

the existing, sub-standard bridge. If the General Services Administration agreed, the old bridge could be given to the county for their use elsewhere.

Work started on the new bridge in September of 1979, and was completed in the fall of 1980. The new concrete bridge curved over the river, changing the approach on the west side and creating a longer, flatter tangent in the road. The old DTNM bridge became a new county bridge about five miles down river from the Tower.

Devils Tower at a glance...

1971 ~ 1980

Superintendent: ~ Homer "Pete" Robinson 1971 - 1980

Visitors: ~ 1,212,038

Climbers: ~ 12,133

Summits: ~ 9,333

Chapter IX

1981 – 1990

1980 ~ U.S. boycotts Summer Olympics in Moscow

*1983 ~ U.S. loses the America's Cup for the first time
in 142 years*

1986 ~ Space Shuttle Challenger accident

1988 ~ Yellowstone National Park's forest fires

1989 ~ Berlin Wall falls

THE DEVILS TOWER NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION consistently proved to be a good partner to the National Park Service, providing aid in dollars, in personnel, and in products that could be sold in the Tower gift shop. They contributed more than \$7,000 in assistance in 1981.

National monument personnel also partnered with local groups and school organizations. The Hulett chapter of Future Farmers of America (FFA) assembled and installed four wheelchair-accessible picnic tables, with more tables planned for construction.

A new entrance kiosk was built and installed during April. Travel numbers would set a new all-time record for 1981, with 300,308 visitors—at the same time, uniformed seasonal staff was down 30 percent. Over 2,000 barrier posts were installed

at various locations on national monument grounds to reduce illegal off-road vehicle use.

On September 24, the NPS Regional Director spoke at an event celebrating the 75th anniversary of Devils Tower National Monument.

In late September, a group of American Indians, mostly Lakota, arrived at the Tower for religious purposes and stayed for four weeks. The largest number participating at any one time was around 60 people. The one serious incident involved a shot being fired into the Indian camp by a local man.

Personnel continued to shift and change jobs throughout the National Park Service system. With the help of a maintenance man, new cedar shingles were installed on two historic buildings. Workers placed a deer-proof fence around the sewage lagoon, and poured concrete slabs for the wheelchair-accessible picnic tables in the campground.

The first recorded wedding at the top of the Tower took place on July 26, 1982, between Jim Cunningham and Barbara Noseworthy. All members of the wedding party were experienced climbers, and all except one had previously climbed the Tower, with Cunningham ascending the Tower numerous times. Cunningham wrote a note in the summit register on a later climb, "I got married up here nine years ago (plus about ten days). The "marriage on the rocks" is still going strong (sorry Barb couldn't get away from work to come on this trip). I'll be back for more. Health and Happiness. JC"¹

Robinson reported that, in August, the Wyoming Travel Commission and KTWO Radio, Casper, made a three-hour live radio broadcast from the Tower Visitor Center.

A two-year plant study by Hollis Marriott, funded by the History Association, was completed, with over 400 plants being identified. Marriott was a graduate student from the University of Wyoming, and had worked as a botanist since 1977. The herbarium research project documented 55 plants previously unrecorded in the County, and two plants new to Wyoming.

DTNM installed a new GE base station radio system in 1983, complete with nine remote stations, four mobiles, and eight portables. This unit replaced the one in use since 1973. The Wyoming Travel Commission sponsored a breakfast for touring foreign writers at the Tower, with the History Association hosting the event. Fifteen sonic booms were recorded in 1983, and Robinson notes that the Tower was buzzed by United States Air Force fighter planes seven times on five different days.

Law enforcement incidents were on the rise in the national monument, with 65 cases in 1984. Cattle trespass occurred on 16 different days, and one deer was illegally killed on DTNM property.

All of the field work for a fire history and a vegetation mosaic were completed, including flood plain cross sections of the Belle Fourche River where it flowed within the national monument boundary. The collection of insects from the Tower area was also completed, with the identification of the specimens expected to take several years.

Robinson records in his report, "Sonic booms declined to one in 1984. They were replaced by military fighter planes that buzzed us on 35 days!"² It seemed the pilots just could not resist taking in the aerial view of the Tower.

Six underground fuel oil tanks were replaced in four Tower residences, and the Visitor Center and Administration Building. New roofs were put on the Picnic Area and Campground Comfort Stations, and the Visitor Center and three residences were rewired to meet new standards.

IN JUNE OF 1984 the world's longest tyrolean traverse (854'2") was set up at the Tower for rescue practice by the NPS and the National Cave Rescue Commission. A summit-to-base tyrolean is a lowering technique designed to keep a victim and rescuer away from the face of the rock by securing the bottom end of the main line far from the base of the wall. (It can also be horizontal across a chasm.) The victim is secured in a litter (a specialized

stretcher for carrying sick or wounded people), and, attended by a rescuer, is slid down the mainline to safety. The speed of the descent is controlled by another rope called the belay line.

A tyrolean is especially useful when there is rough ground at the base of the rescue site, making a carry-out time consuming and difficult, or when there is loose debris on the rock, making it dangerous to lower a litter vertically. These conditions are present at the Tower, making it the perfect location to practice a rescue.

NPS employees from DTNM, the Joshua Tree National Monument Search and Rescue Team from California, and Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota worked with members of the National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) who came from various parts of the U.S. and Canada. Ranger Tom Patterson, head of the search and rescue team from Joshua Tree (JOSAR), and a member and principal instructor of the NCRC, would be the incident commander. The JOSAR team had used a tyrolean for several victim evacuations, and picked DTNM as the place to expand the limits of technical rescue.

While some national parks and monuments maintain search-and-rescue teams, Devils Tower National Monument does not. The staff can only respond to a rescue to the level of their training, which varies greatly from year to year, depending on employee turnover. Climbers climb at their own risk.

In January of 1985 a NOAA (National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration) weather radio receiver was installed in the Visitor Center. Remote speakers were put in the Administration Building, maintenance shop, and several residencies. Robinson felt the Tower staff would be promptly alerted to any unusual weather conditions.

The Visitor Center did not open until late in the season because of interior renovation and the installation of new exhibits, which were well received. The Center, opened on June 23 and closed on October 31, had an attendance of only 86,160 people, the fewest in many years.

Robinson recorded more activity in the air around the Tower: "The incidents of low-flying aircraft increased dramatically in 1985 with the many very low passes by British military aircraft for several weeks. See Aircraft Log, W46 x 5815."³

DTNM got their first computer, an Epson QX-10, in May 1985, purchased with History Association funds. Robinson points out that it was well used and liked by the staff.

Several maintenance and improvement projects were completed. The Tower Trail was seal-coated with the help of four Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) enrollees. A second trailer hook-up site was finished in the campground. The History Association donated and constructed a picnic shelter with a concrete floor; it became a favored location very quickly, even more so after lights and outlets were installed in 1986.

LOW FLYING AIRCRAFT, both civilian and military, continued to plague DTNM in 1986; Robinson was especially bothered by a helicopter service out of Gillette flying sightseers around the Tower, and he noted that many more aircraft were at the national monument than were officially logged—he had seen four airplanes on one particular morning, and none were logged.

Tree thinning was completed on 133 acres near the Visitor Center, to prepare the area for a spring burn in 1987. As a safety precaution, fifty-four dead cottonwoods were cut down in the campground.

During the mid-eighties, more American Indian tribes began returning to the Tower for religious and spiritual ceremonies, responding to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. This Act provided that American Indians have an inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise their traditional religions, with right of entry to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites. In June, a number of American Indians, again mostly Lakota, held a sun dance at the Tower.

Gerald One Feather, a Lakota elder and former chairman of the Oglala tribe, confirms that the Tower is one of several Black Hills locations considered sacred by the Lakotas. Bear Butte, near Sturgis, S.D., Harney Peak, south of Rapid City, S.D., and *Pé Šlá*, a bare hill in the center of the Black Hills, are three other sites at which Indians hold ceremonies. Wind Cave is identified as the place of origin for Lakotas.



Prayer cloths tied to a small pine tree (Devils Tower National Monument)

Each sacred site has a ritual connected to the physical formation. The Tower is considered a place of renewal and regeneration, a place to restore faith—most rituals are performed during the summer solstice. Prayer offerings—colorful bundles and ties filled with tobacco and sage—are left year-round as people visit the Tower to pray and meditate.

A gathering of the seven bands of Lakotas meet at Bear Butte in August, to celebrate their tribal connections. In the spring they “welcome the thunder,”⁴ at Harney Peak and take food as an offering to *Pé Šla* as a welcoming of the season.

One Feather referred to the Lakota belief in four values—faith, “big mind,”⁵ future generations, and natural law. Natural law guides when the ceremonies will take place—a seasonal solstice or a full moon dictate when some rituals will be performed. At the Tower, the summer solstice in June is a call to gather, circle around the pipe, and pray.

ON AUGUST 25, 1986, DTNM had its first fatal climbing accident. Scott Hardy, a 16-year-old from Wright, Wyoming, fell an undetermined distance while climbing alone, and was found lying on top of the leaning column of the Durrance Route by another climbing party. Successfully evacuated and stabilized by park rangers, aided by an emergency medical service and a local physician, he subsequently died in the ambulance between Sundance and Spearfish, S.D.

Robinson noted, “We have had over 20,000 people on top and probably twice that many that climb on portions of the Tower.”⁶ Climbing can be done safely—Tower personnel assist more visitors who injure themselves in the boulder field than they do technical climbers.

That same summer, Shauna Kopischka, age 10 from Laramie, Wyoming, became the youngest girl to climb the Tower. She had been climbing since the age of six, and her father, who was her instructor, climbed the Tower with her. Her story was featured in *National Geographic World* in the January 1987 issue.

ROBINSON RETIRED FROM the National Park Service on January 30, 1987. He and Gisele had built a home on land next to the national monument, and they remained in the area for several years.

William "Bill" Pierce began his superintendent assignment at DTNM on February 15, 1987, transferring from Shenandoah National Park in Virginia. He, his wife, Nadine, and two sons first stayed in the original log house at the base of the Tower, then moved into one of the national monument houses in the river valley.

During the summer the permanent staff was supplemented with sixteen seasonal employees and two volunteers. Special events that year included a *Keep America Beautiful* clean-up day, the dedication of the new interpretive kiosk, the motorcycle rally, and an American Lung Association bike tour. A sun dance was held in May and went very well, according to Pierce. He also says the same of a film made by a Japanese company in September, but there were no more details or information recorded.

He notes, "The DTNHA had another great year of supporting the national monument interpretive programs. They handled visitor information and sales at the visitor center daily during the summer with 62 hours per week in staff. They also funded the construction of the new interpretive kiosk, the new 'Thank You' certificates for the visitors, and various publications."⁷

The monitoring and treatment program for the exotic spurge and thistle continued; the invasive plants were being maintained at an acceptable level. A prescribed burn was attempted, but weather conditions changed and the fire had to be suppressed with only twenty acres burned of the 110-acre-unit. Trees were then removed along the edge of that section to reduce the fire danger.

All of the historic structures were inspected and preservative maintenance completed on the exterior of the entrance building.

More than 280 aircraft over-flights were recorded. As a

result, the FAA and the military agreed to put DTNM on their Aeronautical Charts.

HOT AND DRY weather for the summer season of 1988 encouraged visitation at DTNM, but smoke, haze, and odor from the fires in Yellowstone National Park and the Black Hills area affected the experience.

Pierce felt the national monument needed a Resource Management Specialist to continue, and improve, the resource management program. DTNM hired Jane Gyhra for the newly-created resource management position, with fifteen seasonals and four volunteers supplementing the permanent staff of eight. Some volunteers worked for just a few hours on a specific project. Others worked the summer months at a particular job—campground host, Visitor Center assistant, or administration clerk. The operation of the administration became completely computerized, and the staff received the Equal Employment Award from the Regional Director.

In his monthly report Pierce said:

With fee enhancement money we're also able to complete other high priority projects like the tree restoration project in the campground, the completion of the rehabilitation of all our trails, boundary marking, and backcountry clean up. The cultural resources were also improved because of supplemental funding with all the historic buildings roofs being oiled, all gutters repaired or replaced, and the plywood doors on the historic hose house replaced with historically accurate doors.

We are also working closely with the Wyoming Game and Fish on our concern about the game proof fence that is being erected along our north boundary by the adjacent rancher.⁸

The NPS initiated negotiations with the Wyoming Land Office and the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to

discuss agreements for a two-step land transfer of State land contiguous to DTNM. A garbage dump on the land could be seen by visitors to the Tower, and the State had been slow to clean the site. The State would deed the land to BLM, and the NPS would be responsible for management of the area until it could be acquired by the DTNM. In 1989, meetings between the government agencies resulted in the State retaining ownership, and agreeing to clean up the dump by the next summer.

Over 250,000 visitors to the national monument in 1988 were in contact with some part of the burgeoning interpretive program at the Tower. The Visitor Center season was expanded, opening May 1 and closing November 1, and the daily hours of operation were increased, as well. The addition of a fourth interpreter and two more History Association employees helped facilitate the longer hours and season.

Pierce credited the History Association's outstanding cooperation as being the key to the Tower's successful interpretive program. Besides their visitor contacts, they hosted cooperative projects, like a clean-up day, with area citizens, and a welcoming picnic for the seasonal staff.

HOT, DRY WEATHER continued in the Black Hills region, and Tower personnel helped fight local fires, two large fires in Idaho, the Exxon *Valdez* oil spill in Alaska, and a search and rescue at Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota. During 1989 there was one fire at DTNM, and three fires on land adjacent to the national monument boundary.

Permanent staff saw a major turn-over, with the Chief of Maintenance, Chief Ranger, Administrative Officer, and Resource Management Specialist positions all becoming vacant. The summer staff included 17 seasonal workers, five volunteers, and one worker from the Student Conservation Association (usually a college student who applied for an internship with NPS) to supplement the permanent staff of nine. Of concern to staff was the cost of supporting emergency operations throughout the

U.S; Pierce had served on a Forest Service fire in Idaho for 23 days, but his salary was still paid by DTNM.

Public use of the national monument included several special events throughout the year. Over 2,000 people attended an event at the Tower highlighted by the centennial celebration for Montana, North and South Dakota, the kick-off for the Wyoming centennial, and the centennial birthday of Clyde Ice (the pilot who dropped supplies to the parachutist stranded on top of the Tower). DTNM was also the site for a sun dance, an American Lung Association bike ride, and a Founders Day celebration.

In August the Park converted the existing part-time Resource Management Specialist position to a full-time post, and Gyhra continued the resource protection programs. She had previously supervised a vegetative research contract with the Nature Conservancy that documented threatened plant species in the national monument, and set up a fire effects project. In her new position, she expanded an existing exotic plant control program and improved the documentation and monitoring phases. She remained supervisor of the vegetative study and the fire effects research project, while coordinating the development of the Fire Management Plan with the Black Hills Parks Fire Management Officer.

Gyhra also developed a three-year deer utilization and movement study that would provide baseline data on the deer population and the possible effects of the game-proof fence erected by a neighboring rancher along part of the DTNM boundary. Her office continued to seek funding for water and air quality research and monitoring on national monument grounds.

ONE VERY SPECIAL event rounded out the decade—the Wyoming state centennial. The Tower hosted A Wyoming Centennial Day Program at the new DTNM amphitheatre. After a Presentation of Colors and the National Anthem by the Hulett American Legion Post accompanied by a local quartet, Master

of Ceremonies Charlie Hunt from Rapid City welcomed the crowd.

Leading the program was the dedication of the new amphitheatre and a Centennial Plaque presentation by Superintendent Pierce and the History Association. Several speakers, among them the mayors of Hulett, Sundance, and Gillette, gave brief comments on Wyoming and its centennial before the keynote speech by Hunt. More music and an old-fashioned barbecue followed the formal ceremony.

Devils Tower at a glance...

1981 ~ 1990

Superintendent: ~ Homer "Pete" Robinson 1981 - 1987

William L. Pierce 1987 - 1990

Visitors: ~ 2,993,386

Climbers: ~ 44,525

Summits: ~ 15,667

Chapter X

1991 – 2000

1991 ~ Gulf War

*1994 ~ North American Free Trade Agreement
goes into effect*

1995 ~ Bombing of federal building in Oklahoma City

1999 ~ President Clinton acquitted in impeachment trial

IN RECENT YEARS, THE DEBATE OVER THE FUTURE OF THE national park system has intensified. The fire season of 1988, which burned large portions of Yellowstone National Park and adjacent national forests, elevated fire management to a prime concern. Increased criticism of the NPS from Congress, environmentalists, concessionaires, and other groups over the ownership of urban parks, the transfer of national parks to states, management of parks for people rather than animals and plants, park fees, and other issues created tension. Scientists were becoming increasingly concerned about the lack of scientific research in the national parks, the very places which contain some of the most scenic, geologically, and biologically important features. Many were arguing that science had taken a back seat to recreation.

Add to this the fact that each particular park has its own set of features and its own set of unique problems, and the need for the NPS to coordinate with other federal and state agencies, and the public sector, in the management of national parks and the adjacent lands. The balancing act between these demands has become more difficult with each passing year.

The 1990s were a time of much change and transition within the National Park Service as they tried to adhere to the original NPS edict of conservation of “the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife”¹ and “to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations,”² and tried to incorporate the cultural and recreational needs of the public.

At Devils Tower National Monument, the balancing act resulted in the preparation of a climbing management plan. Over 2,500 climbers signed out in 1991 as climbing to the summit—with climbing on a steady increase, power bolting was banned to protect the Tower and options were being reviewed and outlined in the climbing plan.

American Indians who came to the Tower to hold religious and spiritual ceremonies were beginning to ask for the natural quiet expected in a national park area. When there are climbers on the Tower their voices carry much farther than they would imagine, and the sound of metal on stone as climbers hammer in pitons rings out over the national monument. The clash of the cultural and the recreational demands began to define the Tower management plan.

Superintendent Pierce recorded, in his 1991 report, “The Statement for Management and the Outline of Planning Requirements were revised and approved this year and the Resource Management Plan was entirely rewritten. A number of action plans are being developed to implement the major planning documents.”³

PIERCE WAS THE Incident Commander at the Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota, and he was called out to help at the Fiftieth Commemoration of Pearl Harbor at the USS Arizona Memorial in Oahu, Hawaii. Tower employees helping at fires in the Black Hills that required overnight stays and job vacancies at DTNM resulted in staff shortages that had everyone working beyond their designated job description.

The resource management program grew rapidly and continued making improvements at DTNM. The national monument hired a seasonal curator who completed an assessment of all of the Tower artifacts. Restoration work on the historic Visitor Center and Ranger Office stabilized the logs and foundations of the buildings. Forty trees were planted in the campground, and a program implemented to remove hazard limbs from trees in high risk areas. Annual reports were submitted from the deer study. The Tower Trail was rehabilitated in the summer of 1991 to keep it serviceable until money became available to replace it.

Pierce continued on the Board of Directors of the Black Hills, Badlands and Lakes Association and the Devils Tower Tourism Association. Joint projects with those entities, and a number of presentations made by Tower personnel to local organizations, were credited with maintaining the excellent community relationship the national monument enjoyed.

Another wedding on top of the Tower was recorded on September 21, 1991. The couple, Julie and John Preussner, returned for a Tower visit in 2000 from their home in Dundee, Iowa, and wrote a short synopsis of their experiences that autumn day.

With the bride wearing white spandex and a veil, and the groom wearing black spandex and a top hat, they climbed the Tower via the Durrance Route, accompanied by a municipal judge and two witnesses. Once on top, the couple changed into traditional wedding attire—a wedding dress and a tuxedo. Their

water supply ran low, as they had sacrificed taking extra water to the top in order to have room to pack a video camera, but they returned safely to ground, and were back at the Visitor Center parking lot just after dark.

MORE THAN HALF of the DTNM staff transferred early in 1992. Pierce began work as Chief Ranger at Olympic National Park in Washington; Deborah Bird arrived in March from Yellowstone National Park for the Superintendent position. Summer employees in 1992 included 21 seasonal staff, four volunteers, and two student interns supplementing the permanent staff of nine.

The resource management division initiated several Tower-oriented research projects in order to prepare for the writing of the Climbing Management Plan (CMP): studies on Tower summit flora/fauna/human disturbance; Tower base vegetation impacts; Tower base litter (garbage) impacts; impacts of bolts and routes on the Tower; and Tower avifauna (the birds of the Tower). Dr. Jeffrey Hanson of the University of Texas-Arlington directed a field school to research the use and perception of the Tower by climbers and American Indians.

Climber registration cards from 1937 (when technical climbing for recreation at the Tower began) to August of 1992 were tallied and summarized. A work group composed of climbers, American Indians, local government, an environmental organization, DTNM and NPS Regional office staff, and members of the public was approved and funded to provide a strategy for writing a Climbing Management Plan.

Other resource management actions included ongoing projects—exotic plant control, trimming hazardous trees in the campground, planting cottonwood trees in the campground and willow trees along the river. Resource monitoring was conducted for gypsy moths, prairie dogs, amphibians, reptiles, fish, birds, small rodents, Belle Fourche River pesticides, weather; the museum and Visitor Center exhibits were checked for humidity

and temperature. Research continued on the deer movement and habitat use, with one study documenting how the deer affected the Tower's deciduous trees and shrubs, and a new analysis was started on prairie dog genetics.

A quick response from all divisions of DTNM staff saved the life of Cord Steinmetz on May 29, 1992. Steinmetz fell about 150 feet on the approach to the Durrance Route and sustained critical head and internal injuries. After being treated on the scene by Tower personnel and the Hulett ambulance crew, he was evacuated from the boulder field and flown by military helicopter to Rapid City. He later reported to the Tower that he had made a full recovery from his injuries.

Adjacent landowners, the BLM, and the Wyoming State Land Office had met with the NPS in 1991, and renewed conversations about expanding the national monument boundary. Some progress had been made. A final version of a legislative package was written and hand-carried to the Wyoming delegation by DTNM neighbors. Discussions about a possible boundary expansion continued, with the BLM, the State land office, then Governor Mike Sullivan, and representatives from the State's Congressional delegation participating.

ROCK CLIMBERS FROM the Rapid City, South Dakota, and Gillette, Wyoming, areas helped repair foot trails leading to the climbing routes on the Tower. Thousands of climbers a year traveled the trails, and the approach trails were beginning to erode. Climbers and hikers had also started to wear new paths leading off the trails. Members of Black Hills Climbing Coalition of Rapid City and Northeast Wyoming Climbers Club of Gillette volunteered their help to the NPS on June 26 to repair the approach trails and create ways to reroute traffic off the worn side paths.

On July 4, 1993 Tower employees gave a living history presentation reenacting the 1893 climb of Ripley and Rogers, with the five main characters portrayed by staff—Colonel Ripley,

Willard and Dollie Ripley, William and Linnie Rogers. Music by The Sundance Kids, a local old-time-music band, and a talk entitled "Historical Perspective" by Mitch Mahoney completed the program.

In August, six-year-old Eric Peterson from Wallingford, Connecticut became the youngest climber to scale the Tower. He made the Durrance Route climb with his parents, an uncle, and a friend of the family. Eric received a special patch from the Park rangers, assisted them with a lecture on hiking, and signed a few autographs. He also elicited a promise from his parents that his younger brother, 19-month-old Jay, would not be allowed to climb the Tower until Jay was six—Eric didn't mind the record being tied, but he didn't want it broken.

IN 1994, DEB LIGGETT came on board as superintendent, transferring from Everglades National Park in Florida. She played a role in helping to rebuild Everglades after the devastation of Hurricane Andrew. She joked about her first public appearance as the DTNM Superintendent—she was on the back of a donkey, wearing a helmet in a donkey basketball game fundraiser at Hulett.

The Devils Tower Natural History Association had a record \$240,000 in sales for 1995, due in part to an improvement and upgrade of the Visitor Center and sales area. They made a cash donation to the national monument, and donated a picturesque new mural of the Tower for the Visitor Center. Liggett felt the working relationship with the History Association business manager was strong and productive to both partners.

LIGGETT BEGAN HER second annual report:
1995 will stand out in our minds as the year when the Climbing Management Plan was successfully implemented. Some would say it was implemented against all odds. The plan heralded the beginning of managing the Tower as both a natural and cultural resource.

Director Roger Kennedy visited the Tower in June, marking only the second time that the Director of NPS has visited the nation's first national monument and for the first time an American Indian was employed within our ranks and told the story of the Tower to our visitors. Angora goats ate leafy spurge, a multi-cultural interpretive program was launched, fire burned where and when it was supposed to, first amendment activities took place to protest the new climbing plan, the sun dance was conducted by Lakota people for the eleventh year in a row, the second climbing fatality in the history of the national monument occurred, the NPS reorganized, and employees suffered the indignity of being furloughed, not once, but twice. Through good and bad, the watch on the frontier of the new Intermountain Field Area never wavered.⁴

The Final Climbing Management Plan (FCMP) set a new direction for managing climbing activity at the Tower. The Tower would now be managed as a significant natural and cultural resource. In fact, the Tower was eligible for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places as a traditional cultural property.

The NPS would manage the Tower primarily as a crack climbing site, and in a way that would be more compatible with the geology, soils, vegetation, nesting raptors, visual appearance, and natural quiet of the national monument. Climbing management directly related to the Tower's significance as a cultural resource. No new bolts or pitons were to be permitted, so there would be no new physical impacts to the Tower. With an increase from 312 climbers in 1973 to over 5,000 climbers annually, route development and bolt placement continued to accelerate. In 1995 there were about 220 named routes, and approximately 600 metal bolts and several hundred metal pitons embedded in the Tower.

Numerous American Indian tribes revere the Tower as a

sacred site, and climbers were being asked to voluntarily refrain from climbing during the culturally significant month of June, the month of the summer solstice. The national monument staff began to include the cultural significance of the Tower in their presentations along with the more traditional themes of natural history and rock climbing.

To quote from the FCMP Addendum: "There are many benefits to the implementation of the FCMP. The environmental consequences of the FCMP will include increased protection for natural resources. No critical habitat for listed species will be negatively affected. Visitor experience will be enhanced by a more diverse and balanced interpretive program. In turn, improved communication and understanding among the national monument's users groups will lead to a greater respect and tolerance for differing perspectives."⁵

Under the new regulations of the FCMP, in June of 1985 there was an 85% compliance with the voluntary closure to climbing. In spite of racist complaint letters and threats of illegal activity, major strides were being made with climbing management.

Relationships between the national monument and its neighbors were sometimes fueled by the anti-federal atmosphere surrounding public land management in the west. An increase in traditional cultural use of the Tower by American Indians and disagreement with the FCMP added to the animosity.

Four additional law enforcement personnel were added to the staff and 24-hour coverage of the national monument was provided during the week of the summer solstice in June of 1995. The Sacred Hoop Run and the sun dance were completed without incident.

The Sacred Hoop Run is a spiritual journey, a 500-mile relay around the Black Hills by Lakota runners, beginning and ending at Bear Butte near Sturgis, South Dakota. A Lakota story describes a well-worn path around the Black Hills, a path that represents the Sacred Hoop, symbolizing wholeness, unity, and the great cycle of life and death.

Under a reorganization plan of the NPS, Devils Tower National Monument staff could, and did, choose to remain in the Intermountain Field Area, and became part of the new Rocky Mountain Cluster. Although related geographically to the other NPS Black Hills units, budget and support issues were the basis for the decision; however, DTNM would continue to share a Fire Management Officer with the Black Hills regional units.

THREE SEARCH AND rescues were conducted during 1995 by Tower staff, one of which involved a fatality. An unroped climber, Jan Hanacek, 22, of Chicago, Illinois, fell 150 feet from the Jump Traverse on the Durrance Route. Other climbers saw him fall, but efforts to resuscitate him were unsuccessful.

Sturgis Rally Week was now the busiest week of the year at the Tower. With hundreds of thousands of motorcyclists staying throughout the Black Hills, the national monument played host to thousands of them each day. By working proactively with Rally organizers DTNM hoped to better manage an activity based beyond its boundary, but which had a severe effect on operations at the Tower.

The maintenance division had a busy year. As Liggett recorded in her annual report:

The maintenance division completed the rehabilitation of the visitor center steps and railing, implemented a new sign plan, completed site work for the DTNHA storage building, completed a new VIP [volunteer worker] trailer site, installed new bulletin boards national monument-wide, painted and improved the entrance station, completed a minor renovation of the visitor center interior—and mowed, cleaned, plowed, fixed, figured, repaired, computed, dug, burned and whatever else was necessary to keep national monument operations afloat. The division continues to work minor miracles keeping an aging infrastructure operating and serving park visitors.⁶

Angora goats were grazing on the flowers, seeds and leaves of leafy spurge, an invasive plant, for the second year in a row as part of a cost-share effort with Crook County Weed and Pest Control and two neighboring ranchers. The flea beetle insectary sites in the national monument were harvested and placed on leafy spurge on five adjacent ranches.

A proposal to site an airport adjacent to Hulett and its potential effects on DTNM occupied much of the Tower staff's time. The national monument facilitated formal public comment on the draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed airport. On-going dialogue with Ellsworth Air Force Base resulted in a five-mile flight-free bubble, applicable to all military aircraft originating from the base.

IN 1996 THE NPS was sued in the Federal District Court, alleging constitutional violations as a result of the FCMP. Liggett wrote a recap of the suit's beginnings:

In March 1996, Mountain States Legal Foundation filed suit against the National Park Service on behalf of Tower Guides (Andy Petefish) [Tower Guides was a commercial climbing guide business owned by Andy Petefish], four individual plaintiffs, and Bear Lodge Multiple Use Association alleging that the Final Climbing Management Plan violated their First Amendment rights. A hearing on a preliminary injunction was held in May of 1996.

On June 8, 1996 Judge William Downes issued a preliminary order that granted in part and denied in part the allegations of the plaintiffs. The court ordered the national monument to issue Andy Petefish a commercial use license but upheld all other portions of the plan.

The national monument staff spent major amounts of time compiling the administrative record, preparing declarations, briefing attorneys, and preparing for testimony.

In August of 1996, Plaintiff Petefish started a major campaign on another front, alleging that the national monument was going to the Western States Geographic Names Conference to propose a name change for the national monument. National monument staff was indeed scheduled to attend (and did attend) to make an educational presentation on the national monument name but there was no name change proposal. A contentious public meeting was held at the Devils Tower KOA in August of 1996 and the Wyoming delegation introduced legislation opposing a name change. In September we attended the meeting in Salt Lake City with local, tribal, and NPS representatives and presented all sides of the issue, receiving the compliments of both conference organizers and conference participants.

Also in March of 1996, a consultation meeting was held in Rapid City with 12 tribal representatives and more than 40 American Indians in attendance. The meeting resulted in a resolution to the park superintendent concerning how management of Devils Tower National Monument could accommodate tribal concerns. The NPS acknowledged this as the official position of the tribes and believes that there is room for significant negotiation on all issues raised.

The national monument superintendent has been repeatedly quoted (and not always by admiring audiences) that ‘American Indians are at the poker table and they get to play every hand.’ The new order of business at the Tower is the climber, neighbors, environmental interests *and* American Indian people are at the table. Not everyone acknowledges their right or welcomes them to table and thus sometimes it is an exciting ride.⁷

(In 1998 the U.S. District Court upheld the National monument's FCMP. In an April 26, 1999 ruling, the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit upheld the National Park Service's accommodations of American Indian religious practices at DTNM. In March of 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court denied the plaintiffs appeal of the Tenth Circuit ruling, thus upholding the appellate court's decision as final.)

THE HISTORY ASSOCIATION voted in major changes to their by-laws to create a larger, more diverse board and removed unilateral control from the Board president, thus assuring Board action on nominations and budget issues. They funded the upgrade of the amphitheatre sound system, provided matching funds for the "Parks As Classroom" grant, funded a new expanded cultural program series, and hired two American Indian contract interpreters. Betty Wilson, the long-time business manager, resigned and Lynn Conzelman was selected to take her place.

Totals from Sturgis Rally Week for 1996 indicated the busiest week in DTNM history, with 2923 vehicles recorded on Wednesday (Wyoming Day) of the rally. The Christian Motorcycle Association volunteered for the entire week at the Tower, parking bikes and picking up trash.

On August 21, Jeff Pettenger, a college senior from Roscoe, Illinois fell to his death while leading a variation of the Baily Direct Summit Route. He was climbing with his father, Noel; they had both summited the previous day. It was determined that his protection probably failed when a rock slab came loose, and he fell approximately 100 feet to the Jump Traverse Ledge where his father waited. Agencies involved in the extended rescue operation included the NPS, Crook County Sheriff's Department, Hulett Emergency Medical Services, Hulett Clinic, Crook County Mental Health Center, and several climbers. Pettenger's death was the third climbing fatality at the Tower, the kind of statistic no place wishes to tally.

A high school Student Conservation Association work group

repaired an unpaved trail, replaced 125 water bars, and cleaned 200 wood or rock water bars. (Water bars are bumps constructed in a trail to help divert water runoff to the sides of the trail at various intervals.) They also repaired 7,500 feet of a paved trail, stabilized the Belle Fourche River overlook, and sealed walkways. Tower staff felt the program was a huge success for everyone.

In the main campground and in the primitive campground thirty-one bur oak and forty-eight cottonwood trees were planted. Five species of shrubs, forty-three plants in all, were planted along the edge of Prairie Dog Town to establish a natural hedge barrier to the colony's expansion.

In 1997, Interpretation became a separate division within the national monument structure. Riley Mitchell was hired as the first Chief of Interpretation at the Tower, in charge of Visitor Center operations and public programming. An outdoor education program with an environmental curriculum for fourth graders was developed by Chase Davies—TOWER: Teaching Opportunities with Environmental Resources.

Liggett partnered Tower personnel with the Bearlodge Writers, a writers group based in Sundance, to offer a writer's residency at the Tower. The NPS provides a small apartment, the History Association gives a small travel stipend, and the Bearlodge Writers jury the works submitted, selecting two winners and two alternates. Two one-week residencies are offered each year, with the selected writers choosing a week in either September or October to live and work in the inspiring and secluded environment of the Tower.

Superintendent Liggett left the Tower on November 11, 1997, to become superintendent of a park in Alaska. Chas Cartwright arrived in March of 1998 to take over superintendent duties.

A 280-acre prescribed fire burned through forest and grassland at the national monument on April 29, 1998. Conducted by the NPS, the Forest Service, and state and local firefighters, this was DTNM's third prescribed fire since approval of the Fire Management Plan in 1993. Preliminary data from the burn

indicated that it met all resource objectives, including reduction of the overhead canopy, pole-sized trees, and dead and down fuels. However, a controversy raged after the fire.

As Superintendent Chas Cartwright stated, "The spark that lit the fuse was the burn location."⁸ Local people were outraged because blackened trees now marred the primary view of the Tower. Regional and local newspapers published articles highly critical of DTNM management. Some press also added to the discord, printing a few inaccurate stories, one of which portrayed the superintendent as an arsonist.

Soon the Wyoming congressional delegation was involved, demanding further information on the fire. Although the prescribed fire at the Tower met all legal requirements for public notification, local residents felt strongly that not enough information had been published. The experience underscored the importance of using the fire management process to address the visual impacts to be expected from a prescribed fire. Despite intensive efforts by the NPS to publicize the natural role that fire plays in ecosystems—deemed especially necessary since the 1988 Yellowstone fires—the general public is often unwilling to tolerate the effects of this powerful force of nature.

Another climbing fatality on September 11, 1999, added to the somber mood of the late 1990s at the Tower. Richard Harwood of Austin, Texas, fell approximately 130 feet while rappelling off the Wiessner Route. Harwood and his climbing partner apparently misjudged the distance to the next set of anchors and Harwood rappelled off the end of his rope.

Devils Tower at a glance...

1991 ~ 2000

Superintendent: ~ William L. Pierce 1991

Deborah Bird 1992 – 1993

Deb Liggett 1994 – 1997

Chas Cartwright 1998 – 2000

Visitors: ~ 4,219,884

Climbers: ~ 48,567

Summits: ~ 17,405

Chapter XI

2001 – 2006

*2001 ~ Terrorist attacks on World Trade Center
and Pentagon*

2002 ~ Department of Homeland Security created

2003 ~ Space Shuttle Columbia disaster

*2005 ~ Chicago White Sox wins World Series-
first time since 1917*

2006 ~ Devils Tower National Monument Centennial

WHEN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WAS ESTABLISHED in 1916 it became responsible for the fourteen national parks and twenty-one national monuments then in existence. In 2006, it oversees 390 parks: historic sites, parks, trails, areas; war memorials; national monuments; preserves; battlefields; lake and sea shores; recreation areas; islands; and wild rivers. The areas it manages are as varied as the America it serves.

That diversity is the backbone of the NPS, but it also makes system-wide mandates difficult to supervise. What might work to control issues at a coastal park may not work for a mountainous area, and probably would not address issues inherent to a landlocked park.

In November of 2001, the final General Management Plan

(GMP) for Devils Tower National Monument was issued. Its purpose was to help managers of the national monument make decisions about development, visitation, and natural and cultural resources over the next 15 to 20 years. A few of the major issues facing the Tower staff are: vehicle congestion, crowded facilities, limited orientation and interpretation, and protecting the rural character of land outside national monument boundaries.

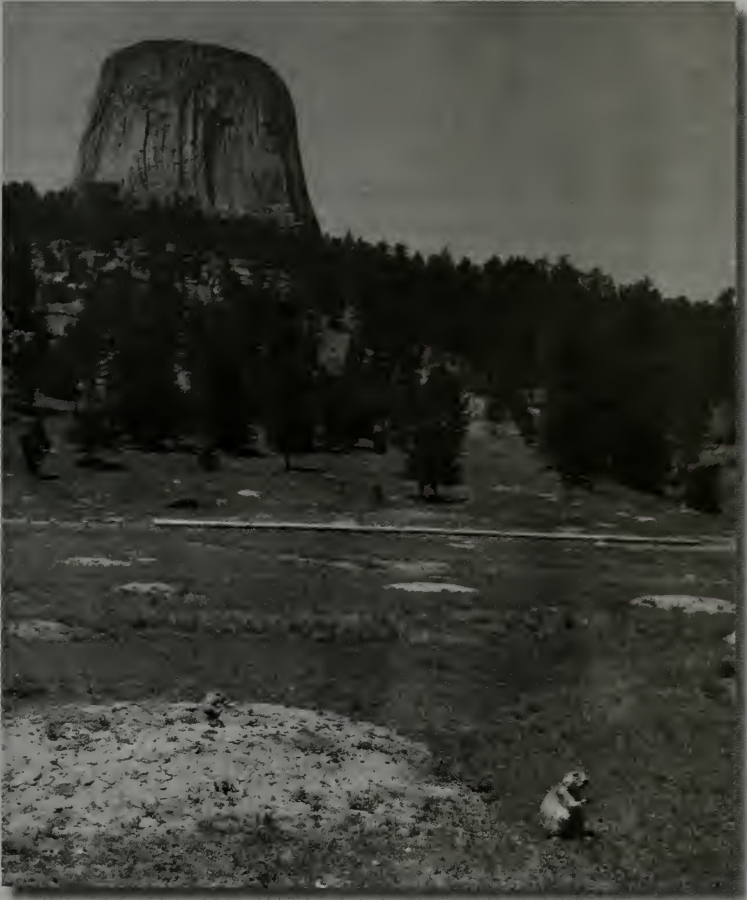
The GMP describes and analyzes five alternatives, beginning with Alternative 1, called the no-action alternative, with the other four offering various changes, including pedestrian plazas, relocation of buildings, a new prairie dog viewing area, staging areas, and a shuttle system to move visitors throughout the national monument. The potential environmental consequence of each alternative is discussed, and other adverse effects of each management plan are detailed. The GMP also tried to address the degradation of natural systems, changing regional land uses, and the conflicts among various user groups.

THE TOWER STORYBOX gives visitors to the national monument a chance to answer the question, "What does the Tower mean to you?" People are encouraged to share their written thoughts, poems, stories, and essays about the Tower. To kick off the Storybox project, the Bearlodge Writers were invited to take a ranger-guided tour around the Tower Trail, spend the afternoon writing at the picnic shelter, and submit their edited works to the Storybox. Copies of selected works were displayed at the Visitor Center, and other pieces were compiled in notebooks to be read by visitors. The Tower Storybox is an ongoing, interactive project.

Prairie Dog Town continues to be a popular attraction at DTNM, giving visitors an up-close exposure to a wild animal. Members of the black-tailed prairie dog colony are enchanting as they eat, play, groom themselves, and warn each other of perceived danger. Distinctive vocal patterns of the prairie dog "bark", a high-pitched squeak, are associated with specific

threats to the colony. Named “little dogs” by early French travelers, these highly-social animals are a rodent, closely related to ground squirrels, chipmunks, woodchucks, and marmots.

Living in a restricted area between the Tower and the Belle Fourche River, the number of prairie dogs the Tower colony can support is based on several environmental factors, including predators, weather changes, availability of edible plants, and disease. The entrance road into DTNM running through the prairie dog town is also a hazard to this particular colony.



DTNM prairie dog town with the entrance road and the Tower in the background. (Devils Tower National Monument)

Prairie dogs are native to the Great Plains area, once ranging from northern Mexico to southern Canada. Their burrows are dangerous for horses and livestock, and for a time many people believed that the prairie dogs were competing with cattle for food. (Superintendent Hartzell recalled his agreement with local ranchers: "You raise your cattle outside the monument, we'll raise the prairie dog inside."¹)

Elimination of prairie dog predators in recent history, mainly the black-footed ferret but also coyote and fox, contributed to the overpopulation of prairie dogs, which in turn led to an extensive poisoning program throughout the West. Today, prairie dogs are found mainly in protected areas within state and national parks and monuments. Management of the prairie dogs at the Tower has changed over the years—the staff no longer kills rattlesnakes and other predators, recognizing their value to the national monument ecosystem.

The changing economics and development patterns in the West threaten the traditional ranching lifestyle in the area, and increase the potential for development on lands adjacent to the national monument. Much of the allure of the Tower is its rural, rustic setting in the forested hills.

Chas Cartwright accepted a position at Dinosaur National Park, leaving the Tower in January of 2002. Lisa Eckert moved from Knife River Indian Villages National Historical Site in June, 2002, to serve as Tower superintendent.

The new Hulett Municipal Airport, located nine miles from the national monument, may affect the natural quiet and viewshed at the Tower. Airport planners predicted nearly 10,000 takeoffs and landings per year, most concentrated in the summer months. A computer analysis of the viewshed indicates that night lighting at the airport could be visible from inside the national monument grounds.

Several years of interagency and public cooperation were spent in planning the airport, which opened in October of 2003. During the site selection studies, the Federal Aviation

Administration (FAA) issued a “No Effect Determination”² regarding the airport’s activities and any effect those activities might have for DTNM. The final assessment found that the Tower was outside the airport’s area of potential effect, and that airport operations would not affect the characteristics of DTNM which make it eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Designed to increase community and agency acceptance of the airport and to alleviate NPS concerns, the Hulett Airport Advisory Board (HAAB) agreed to some cooperative actions. One is the voluntary minimum two-mile no-fly advisory zone around the Tower, with a three-mile zone to be considered for the month of June, when most American Indian traditional ceremonies are held. The zone would be based on the center coordinates for DTNM. The HAAB also agreed to direct approach and takeoff traffic away from the Tower. Beacon shielding, noise monitoring, and exhibits on cultural awareness to be displayed at the airport’s main building were among other cooperative actions.

THE DTNM HAS been collecting data for many years, compiling, documenting, and collating material for use in NPS objectives. In 2001, the national monument entered into a more comprehensive study to accumulate baseline inventory data of vertebrates and vascular plants on park land. Thirteen parks in the Northern Great Plains Network would take part in a study plan to fulfill the directives of the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998. The Act required parks to have a program of inventory and monitoring of resources that would help provide information on long-term trends in the condition of those resources, and encourage the use of science to make management decisions.

Mountain and plains species meet at the Tower, in the ecological mix distinctive to the Black Hills. Of great concern to the national monument, for the purposes of this study, were the invasion of non-native plants and the loss of natural regeneration

of cottonwoods and willows along the Belle Fourche River.

Jim Cheatham, Chief of Resource Management at DTNM, is working to identify data gaps, cataloguing known resources at the Tower, and determining what to monitor to create an early warning system for environmental health. The riparian areas at the Tower are of concern—Cheatham has tried to get funding to rehabilitate the sections of river within his jurisdiction.

In March of 2005 the “Northern Great Plains Exotic Plant Management Plan and Environmental Assessment” became the current management tool for the exotic plants (designated as noxious weeds by the State of Wyoming) on national monument grounds—leafy spurge, Canada thistle, houndstongue, common mullein, Russian thistle, biennial thistles (Scotch, musk, and bull), cheatgrass, smooth brome, Kentucky bluegrass, and tumbling mustard.

Four rustic historic structures at the DTNM were listed on the National Register of Historic Places on July 7, 2000. They are the Old Administration Building (Visitor Center), the Custodian’s Residence (Ranger Office), Fire Hose House/Shed, and the Entrance Station. In 2004, a “Historic Structure Report and Historic Structure Assessment” of the four buildings was prepared by Cheatham, along with others working within the NPS system. This report documented the architecturally significant features of the structures, identified changes to the structures, evaluated and assessed the current condition of the buildings, and made recommendations for preservation treatment.

A new Fire Management Plan went into effect in 2004, replacing one in use since 1991. Prescribed fires continue to be used as an appropriate tool to meet resource objectives. As NPS management planning becomes more science-based and proactive, fire management assumes a role of greater importance. It serves as a detailed program of action, providing specific guidance and procedures for accomplishing national monument objectives.

The first fee at the Tower, instituted in 1939, was \$.50 a vehicle.

The latest increase in the basic entrance fees at DTNM came into effect in January 1, 2004—the fee for private vehicles rose to \$10, with a \$5 fee for pedestrians, bicycles, and motorcycles. As a participant in the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program since its inception in 1997, DTNM is allowed to keep eighty percent of the revenue generated at their entrance station. These monies have been used to resurface the three-mile park road, patch and seal the Tower Trail, design and construct new Visitor Center displays, and rehabilitate the interior of the 1930s-era Visitor Center and the exteriors of all the historic log buildings at the Tower.

The issue of fees—the question of whether or not visitors to national parks and monuments should pay “per use” fees or if the expense of the national parks and monuments should be paid by the general taxpayer—has been an ongoing debate since the first visitor fees were levied at Mount Rainier National Park in Washington state in 1908. Other parks followed with their own car fee collections, monies that were considered justified to help with the cost of building roads in national park areas.

TECHNICAL CLIMBING AT the Tower continues to draw people from all over the world. Considered one of the finest traditional crack climbing areas in North America, routes on the Tower range from 5.7 to 5.13 in technical difficulty, although many climbers consider some of the older routes harder than the original ratings imply.

In late March 2006, the review and update of the 1995 Climbing Management Plan (CMP) was completed. Primary elements of the CMP Update are an improved climber education program, revision of safety standards, and completion of maintenance on the climbing access routes.

The dedicated climbing registration office, new in 2005, will continue to be staffed with climbing rangers to provide information and service to climbers. A climber education video planned for release in 2007 is designed to increase climber

awareness of safety, resource effects, and the Tower's cultural significance, as is the redesigned climber registration permit.

Commercial climbing guides, who offer climbing services from businesses based outside the national monument, are permitted by the NPS to conduct guided climbs on the Tower. They will now be required to show certification by an organization that trains and tests guides for competency, such as the American Mountain Guides Association, and several revisions have been



*Climbers on the southwest corner of the Tower
(Devils Tower National Monument)*

made to the commercial guide permits.

Other portions of the 1995 CMP remain in effect: the June voluntary climbing closure, bolt replacement and hammers allowed, but no new bolting or power drills. Temporary route closures are made as needed, most notably for the prairie falcon nesting sites on the west face of the Tower.

Currently, there is no registration fee, but all visitors scaling the Tower or climbing above the boulder field are required to register before and after climbing each day. The information gathered is added to the historical database of climbing records at DTNM, which has been maintained since Wiessner's climb in 1937.

From a peak of over 6,000 climbers in the 1990s, the average number of climbers in recent years has been around 5,000 annually, with approximately 2,000 of that number reaching the summit of the Tower. Since 1937, the Tower has had a climber reach the top over 50,000 times. There is risk in climbing the Tower, but that risk is minimized by the proper use of climbing and safety equipment and some knowledge of technical climbing.

On May 17, 2003, Jacqueline Weimer sustained fatal injuries after falling while rappelling adjacent to the El Cracko Diablo climbing route on the Tower. She and her climbing partner had just completed the Soler Route and rejoined three friends on the Meadows, the grassy ledge on the south face of the Tower. They decided to all rappel together, and Weimer was the last to descend. Several factors were determined to have contributed to the accident, including the extreme length of the rappel, the absence of blocking knots tied at free rope ends, and uneven rope lengths on the double rope rappel. Weimer lost control of one rope and it slipped through her rappel device. Hers is the fifth recorded climbing fatality at DTNM.

In 2005, Superintendent Eckert revived an idea for dual-names for DTNM first proposed by Superintendent Liggett in 1996, calling the Tower "Bear Lodge National Historic Landmark",

but keeping the existing Devils Tower National Monument name, as well. U. S. Congresswoman Barbara Cubin introduced a bill to prevent any name change, responding to opposition to the additional name. Similar disagreements are being seen throughout the country at monuments, lakes, and mountains, as government agencies strive to recognize the cultural and historical attributes of sites by renaming, or dual-naming, national landmarks.

Two major leadership roles within DTNM changed hands during the centennial year of 2006. After Superintendent Eckert moved to a NPS position in New York in November 2005, Dorothy FireCloud, a member of the Rosebud Sioux, arrived in June 2006 to become DTNM's first American Indian caretaker. Linda Tokarczyk began work with the History Association in July, and took over as Business Manager when Lynn Conzelman retired in October.

Several special events were held at DTNM throughout the 2006 summer season in celebration of the national monument centennial, culminating in a commemoration ceremony on September 24, 2006. The Devils Tower Centennial Committee and History Association, in partnership with the NPS, planned, organized, and executed programs for five key celebratory events.

Almost 900 people enjoyed a reenactment of the Old Settlers' Picnic on June 18, with the Buttons and Bows Homemakers Club in charge of details. The Club welcomed visitors to the picnic in their period costumes, while attendees enjoyed an antique car show, quilt display, historical photographs, Tower memorabilia, and informative speeches.

On July 4 climbers paid homage to the 1893 climb, raising an American flag on the Tower summit. Present that day were Jan and Herb Conn, Todd Skinner, Jim McCarthy, Dennis Horning, and other climbers with a special connection to the Tower. Visitors could watch climbing demonstrations and participate in a climbing workshop.

The Cowboy Festival July 22 and 23, held on private land just outside the DTNM entrance, boasted an outdoor craft festival, food booths, petting zoo, and a western art show. A rotating schedule of entertainment over the two days culminated in a performance by Baxter Black, who charmed the audience with his cowboy poetry and his unique brand of western wisdom. The weekend was hot and dry, although attendance may have been negatively affected by a local wildfire which closed area roads for a time the week prior to the festival.

Rainy and cold weather prevailed for the American Indian Heritage Weekend August 25-27. Drum groups, traditional dance performers, and musicians shared their talents throughout the event, and teepees stood tall in the picnic area where native artists demonstrated traditional crafts.

The anniversary weekend of September 22-24 opened on Friday evening with Mark Klemetsrud, a Theodore Roosevelt enactor, giving a program on Roosevelt's boyhood. On Saturday, exhibits and presentations on the park's resources were available at the picnic area, with a free shuttle transporting visitors to the Visitor Center at the base of the Tower. Early evening found Klemetsrud presenting Theodore Roosevelt, A Conservation President in the amphitheatre, followed by the Little Sun/High Eagle Drum and Dance Group from Ethete, Wyoming.

The commemoration ceremony on Sunday afternoon was well attended, with dignitaries on the dais and visitors filling all available seating. Northern Cheyenne Tribal President Eugene Little Coyote represented his tribe at the activities, as did President of the Rosebud Sioux Rodney Bordeaux. Other special guests included U.S. Senator Craig Thomas, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi's State Director Robin Bailey, U.S. Representative Barbara Cubin, NPS Intermountain Regional Director Mike Snyder, and Governor Dave Freudenthal.

In keeping with Tower tradition, blessings were given, speeches were made, and bands played, with the Tower as a glorious backdrop. Theodore Roosevelt IV, great-grandson

of President Roosevelt, rode a horse to the stage and gave the keynote address. Refreshments were served at the picnic shelter, where visitors could watch a video address by Vice President Dick Cheney.

STUDIES AT THE national monument are evaluated, updated, and the data compiled in ways useful to determining policy change and successful programs. DTNM staff count prairie dogs, birds, animals, flowers, accidents, overflights of the Tower by aircraft, livestock trespass, and visitors to the Tower. They watch the sky, the land, the water, and wonder which way the wind will blow, both literally and figuratively.

The NPS effort to incorporate all of history, and to educate visitors about all facets of a national park or monument's worth, has resulted in broad mandates and directives. At Devils Tower National Monument, these have resulted in active Interpretation and Resource Management departments working to collect, disseminate, preserve, and publicize the varied and important aspects of the Tower environment—the physical, cultural, and historical elements that are the foundation of a Tower experience.

DTNM continues to strive for the proper balance between the economic, ecological, and aesthetic concerns of public use. The historical and cultural memory of place—that intangible, elusive worth—is evident to those who work at the Tower. Horace Albright, who played a leading role in the National Park Service from 1917 to 1933 in various official capacities, had this to say about America's special places: "To preserve our precious history and heritage we must be devoted to the past, vigilant in the present and optimistic about the future."³

As the Tower stands witness to the beginning of another century of national monument status, we have only today, the bridge between the past and the future—a time of reflection to appreciate the past and envision the future, a time of action to affect the future and reconcile the past. The Tower stands,

witness to the history of this western landscape, witness to the stories told and lived at Devils Tower National Monument.

Devils Tower at a glance...

2001 ~ 2006

Superintendent: ~ Chas Cartwright 2001 – 2002

Lisa Eckert 2002 – 2005

Dorothy FireCloud 2006 –

Visitors: ~ 1,932,929 (2001-2005)

Climbers: ~ 13,854 (2001-2003)

Summits: ~ 5,311 (2001-2003)

Author's Notes

MAGIC AND MYSTERY COEXIST WITH MORE TANGIBLE elements at the Tower, as I imagine they do at other scenic places with a sense of the sacred about them. This sacred/scenic dichotomy—the balancing act of the visual and the emotional—abounds within the National Park Service, and certainly in other organizations with missions of conservation and preservation. Many of the natural wonders that constitute NPS holdings were areas of prayer and sanctification long before they were selected as areas to be preserved for their scientific or scenic benefits.

Magic and mystery can be serendipitous. Cher and Mark Burgess of Sundance made an impromptu trip to the Tower one spring for a picnic with their family. As they walked the Tower Trail, music could be heard up ahead. A climber, on top of a pitch partway up the Tower, played a saxophone, the riff and shuffle of a blues solo drifting down through the pines to an appreciative audience gathered on the trail below.

There were several stories regarding events at the Tower that my research (to date) has not been able to corroborate. One such story claimed that William Rogers became incapacitated on the morning of the first recorded climb in 1893. He made it over the boulder field, but could go no further. While hidden from view, his wife Linnie changed into his climbing suit and proceeded to climb to the top of the Tower.

A verbal account, handed down from parents, who were present that day, to their daughter, contained discrepancies about other known facts, casting doubt on the veracity of their claim. Mention in a letter saying Linnie made the first climb could be interpreted as confusion between the 1893 climb and Linnie's recorded climb in 1895. To have been able to prove the story as true, especially in Wyoming, which is noted for other women's firsts, would have been a delight.

One woman had been told that she was born at the Tower while her parents were members of a commune there in the late 1960s. She was searching for answers to her personal history, but I did not come across any information to satisfy her curiosity.

Another story claimed that Theodore Roosevelt had personally visited the Tower. A letter from C. P. Berry to Dick Stone in 1933 related a meeting Berry had had with a group of horseback riders in 1887 or 1888, who were traveling to the Tower. Berry was convinced one of the riders was Roosevelt, and that Roosevelt had written an account of the trip in a popular magazine of that time. Berry's sister had read the article, and sent it to him, but he never received the magazine. Roosevelt may have passed through the area while on a hunting trip in the mid-1880s and, depending on weather conditions, he could have seen the Tower from a distance on the Gillette-to-Newcastle leg of his train tour in 1903. However, as yet, I have found no evidence of an actual visit to the Tower. Even with help from Dan Chapin (author of a thesis about Roosevelt and the Antiquities Act), Josh Reyes (park ranger at Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, Roosevelt's home), and the Theodore Roosevelt Association, I cannot confirm that Roosevelt visited the Tower.

In any historical writing, an author is dependent on the written records left—not only made and left, but also found. For every box of reports located and newspaper clippings unearthed, countless other documents may still reside in closets, desk drawers, and storage boxes. For every story reported in the newspapers or recorded in an official file, many more may exist

in family diaries, journals, letters, and photographs.

Because this book is an account of the Devils Tower National Monument, there are many stories shared with me or found in my research that did not fit that basic mandate; personal experiences that did not fit the book's premise, but rather, were Tower stories—reflections of a personal tie to a public place, vignettes of experience that imbue a life with richness and depth.

One couple, who lived in a rented log cabin at the base of the Tower in the early 1950s, would sit on their porch during thunderstorms and watch lightning dance on the Tower. An 88-year-old great-grandmother recalled her first trip to the Tower in 1919—by 2002, four generations of her family from Ohio had made many visits to what she termed “God’s country.” Another grandmother, of the Nakota Oyates, called the Tower “Gray Sacred Horned Pipe,” and when in combination with the Little Missouri Buttes, referred to the group as the Four Sisters. She said people of a lesser spiritual nature went to the Buttes; only the spiritually strong went to the Tower.

Cheryl Wales, born and raised on a ranch 20 miles east of DTNM, attended a Relay For Life walk around the Tower. “Pretty amazing . . . seeing the sun rise at the Tower . . . walking a dirt path lighted by the luminaries. . . .” She then joined a group of ladies practice-climbing on the talus slope and the Tower with commercial climbing guides supervising the activity: “. . . I truly hope to rock climb more. I don’t know if I have a need to go to the top; maybe. But I certainly want to climb again. The climbers talked a lot about the spiritual aspect of it; the intense focus and energy, the wonder of surroundings, the trust of partners, and the physical feel of stretching yourself. It is all powerful and real.”

Dean and Tiny Bush (Dollie Ripley Heppler was Tiny’s great-aunt) have many of memories of time spent at the Tower—her grandfather, Frank Proctor, brewing his “very potent” coffee in a copper boiler over an open fire for the Old Settlers’ Picnics; the dances in the old log building with no chinking, so the children

bedded down in cars could watch the festivities; eating “the best pies ever” at Thurman’s café, located along the entrance road to the Tower; the school reunions, 4-H campouts, the picnics, rodeos, and horse races. Tiny says, “I am still in awe when I drive and come to the top of Oudin Hill [on Highway 14 to the east of the Tower] and there in the distance you see the Missouri Buttes in the background with the Tower standing out as if to say ‘Look at me, one of the world’s greatest wonders.’”

Warm and golden, cold and gray—the Tower has many faces, the shadow and color depending on a sunset, a sunrise, the slant of light angling through clouds. It is perhaps appropriate that many of the Tower’s stories remain untold, that the mystery continues to enchant future generations, continues to create a place to let the earth shift—a place of wisdom and wonder and rock.

Appendix A

Four Directions, Four Colors

MANY OF THE TRIBES WHO CONSIDER THE TOWER A SACRED place believe in the strength and power of the four directions, represented by four colors (black, red, yellow, and white). These colors are often used for prayer cloths seen at the Tower. The Lakota story of White Buffalo Calf Woman tells the origins of the four colors, the Sacred Pipe, and the Seven Sacred Rites. The following is adapted from an account by Chief Arvol Looking Horse, Keeper of the Pipe.

Not long after the Flood, the buffalo disappeared. The People were starving and crying. Scouts looked for game but always returned empty-handed.

One day two scouts were sent out, and saw not even a rabbit. As the scouts returned, a woman, carrying a bundle, came over a hill dressed in a beautiful white buckskin dress. As the scouts talked, she came closer and pointed to the scout with bad thoughts. He went towards her, thinking to take her.

The other scout tried to stop him. "She's sent by the Great Spirit. She's the answer to the People's prayer for help—a Spirit-woman."

The lustful scout refused to listen. As he reached for the woman a swirling cloud suddenly enveloped him. When the cloud lifted, his skeleton lay at her feet. Spirit-woman said, "Go; tell your People what you have seen. I will come tomorrow from where the sun sets. I have a great gift in this Sacred Bundle."

The next day she returned carrying the Bundle. She sang a beautiful song that we still sing today. She walked clockwise around the altar prepared by the Buffalo People, then set the Sacred Bundle on the altar. She opened it to reveal the sacred C'anupa, the Pipe of Pipes.

"This is the Sacred Pipe," she said. "By smoking this C'anupa, you make personal contact with Wakan Tanka (the Great Mystery). Following the way of this Pipe, you will walk in a sacred way.

"The red stone of the C'anupa's bowl represents the blood of the People. The wooden stem represents the Tree of Life, the root of our ancestors. As this Tree grows, so does the spirit of the People.

"The Sacred Pipe is put together in prayer, connecting the worlds above and below. Present your prayers to all four Sacred Directions, then pray to the Great Spirit above and Mother Earth below. Sing your songs and pray for life, peace, harmony, and happiness."

She warned, "You must have a good heart and mind. Honor the Sacred Places, Sacred Ceremonies, and Sacred Sites. Each Site is an altar to the Great Spirit. Gather there often and pray and sing as I have taught you."

She left in a clockwise motion, returning to where the sun sets. On top of the hill, she looked back, rolled over and became a black buffalo. She rolled over a second time, becoming a red buffalo, the third time becoming a yellow buffalo, and the fourth time a white buffalo. Then she walked over the hill and out of sight. There she received her name, White Buffalo Calf Woman, and we received the four colors used in our ceremonies.

The Seven Sacred Rites that sustain our People yet today are: Purification ceremony; Sun Dance; Vision Quest; Making of a relative (an adoption ceremony); Throwing of the sacred ball (a children's ceremony); Womanhood ceremony; and Keeping of the Spirit.

The Sacred Pipe is a Spirit. When the Sacred Pipe is filled, our spirit should be pure. Prayers are for health, protection, guidance, and wisdom; nothing more. A thank you ceremony always follows a healing ceremony. That is why we return to the Sacred Black Hills, to give thanks to the "Heart of Everything That Is."

Appendix B

American Antiquities Act of 1906 16 USC 431-433

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That any person who shall appropriate, excavate, injure, or destroy any historic or prehistoric ruin or national monument, or any object of antiquity, situated on lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States, without the permission of the Secretary of the Department of the Government having jurisdiction over the lands on which said antiquities are situated, shall, upon conviction, be fined in a sum of not more than five hundred dollars or be imprisoned for a period of not more than ninety days, or shall suffer both fine and imprisonment, in the discretion of the court.

Sec. 2. That the President of the United States is hereby authorized, in his discretion, to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments, and may reserve as a part thereof parcels of land, the limits of which in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects to be protected: Provided, That when such objects are situated upon a tract covered by a bona fide unperfected claim or held in private ownership, the tract, or so much thereof as may be necessary for the proper care and management of the object, may be relinquished to the Government, and the Secretary of the Interior is hereby authorized to accept the relinquishment of such tracts in behalf of the Government of the United States.

Sec. 3. That permits for the examination of ruins, the excavation of archaeological sites, and the gathering of objects of antiquity upon the lands under their respective jurisdictions may be granted by the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, and War to institutions which they may deem properly qualified to conduct such examination, excavation, or gathering, subject to such rules and regulation as they may prescribe: Provided, That the examinations, excavations, and gatherings are undertaken for the benefit of reputable museums, universities, colleges, or other recognized scientific or educational institutions, with a view to increasing the knowledge of such objects, and that the gatherings shall be made for permanent preservation in public museums.

Sec. 4. That the Secretaries of the Departments aforesaid shall make and publish from time to time uniform rules and regulations for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act.

Approved, June 8, 1906

Notes

DETO	Devils Tower National Monument (as used in National Park Service material)
DOI	Department of the Interior
DTNM	Devils Tower National Monument
NPS	National Park Service
U.S.	United States

Any entries with a DETO number or a Vertical File number will be found in the bibliography under “National Park Service, Devils Tower National Monument.”

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WARM AND GOLDEN, COLD AND GRAY, THE TOWER has many faces—the shadow and color depending on a sunset, a sunrise, or the slant of light angling through clouds. This history of America's first national monument begins with an igneous intrusion and ends in a centennial celebration. The Tower continues to enchant visitors and attract climbers, continues to be a landmark physically and spiritually, continues to stand witness to the design of time.